

NEW STATESMAN

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Amsterdam College

OCT 17 1979

The TUC: Responsibility without power



Gamblers' rights: odds on the bookies/Japan's military build-up

Mary Holland: why the Pope's visit is bad for Ireland

Sean Hignett: Edinburgh Festival/Julian Barnes: Sir James Goldsmith

Ken Coates: Frank Cousins, the democratic Messiah

Tom Paulin: the futile Hardy industry

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Surface mail:

UK £17, Overseas £18.50

Air mail:

Europe £22, Middle East £23.50, Africa, India £24.50, Australasia, Far East £25.50, USA \$49.00, Canada \$59.00

New Statesman

10 Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ

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Cables: Newstat, London WC1

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Bring the TUC back to life

IN THIS ISSUE we examine the position of the TUC and British trade unionism. Briefly, it is argued that British unions, though strong, are not powerful because they do not exert any real control over the important areas of economic and business decision-making in an unequal capitalist society. The experience of the TUC in wandering around the corridors of the corporate state shows them to be hopelessly lost.

It follows from this that it would be utterly folly for the delegates at Blackpool to allow themselves to be carried away by attacks on the Tories and rhetorical harking back to what could have been, if only the Labour government had listened to the TUC instead of to the IMF. At this critical time it is imperative that they get to grips with the problems of their own movement and of British capitalism.

The price that British trade unionism has paid for the TUC's policy of responsibility without power is a growing disenchantment among ordinary workers - and especially among their elected shop floor representatives - with union leadership. This is the real lesson which should be learnt from the events of last winter. To blame the fall of the Labour government on the actions of the lorry drivers and the public sector workers would be to overlook the reasons why those strikes took place. Only the most bigoted could argue that it had nothing to do with the fact that the leadership of the unions and the Labour Party were increasingly out of touch with the feelings and aspirations of most workers.

This is the price we have paid for a system which encourages people to believe that the world can be changed and rogue employers disciplined merely by the good offices of elected (or, frequently, unelected) full time union officials. At a purely practical level, these people are too grossly overworked in

Britain's underfunded unions to be able to do more than a fire-fighting job. They are no match for the corporate planners and treasurers of large businesses. More importantly, trade unionists (of all people) know that important advances are not made simply by passing laws, introducing planning agreements and forming tripartite organisations of professional union bureaucrats, professional business bureaucrats, and professional government bureaucrats. They are made by the concerted action of working people. The Labour government's Health and Safety at Work Act, for example, would have achieved little but for the energetic and imaginative work of shop stewards.

Laws, trade union bureaucracies and national economic plans are not by any means unimportant. But what can make trade unions vehicles for social change is the democratic combination of industrial action, intelligence and information. At the moment, many of the exciting developments in British trade unions are taking place at factory and office level - for example, the appreciation of the need to raise demands about investment, planning and product decisions. At the same time there are signs of independent initiatives by workers: the formation of shop stewards' committees within large multi-national companies, the production of alternative plans and the formation of local trade union information centres.

All these developments threaten in some way the historical role of trade union officials, but they do not threaten their existence. If life is to be breathed back into organisations like the TUC, these people's energies and expertise will have to be devoted much more to equipping ordinary workers with necessary skills and resources, so that they themselves can grapple with the many problems which confront them.

NOTES

ITV companies catch franchise fever

Our correspondent writes: ITV screens have now been blacked out for nearly three weeks. As we went to press there were rumours that the ITV companies, desperate to keep to their plans for the most important date in the ITV calendar - the new autumn schedules, due to start towards the end of September - were going to offer to negotiate in order to get the stations back on the air. Staff would need to be at work from 10 September for these schedules to remain intact.

The dispute is, of course, about money, and about the scope of collective bargaining after four years of wage restraint. But there are other important issues. One is the strength - or weakness - of the ITV unions. This will be crucial over the next few years as the companies prepare themselves for the introduction of new technology, the fourth channel and the new ITV franchises. An aspect of 'franchise fever' which hasn't received the attention it deserves is the question of the statutory obligations placed on the ITV companies as regards programming.

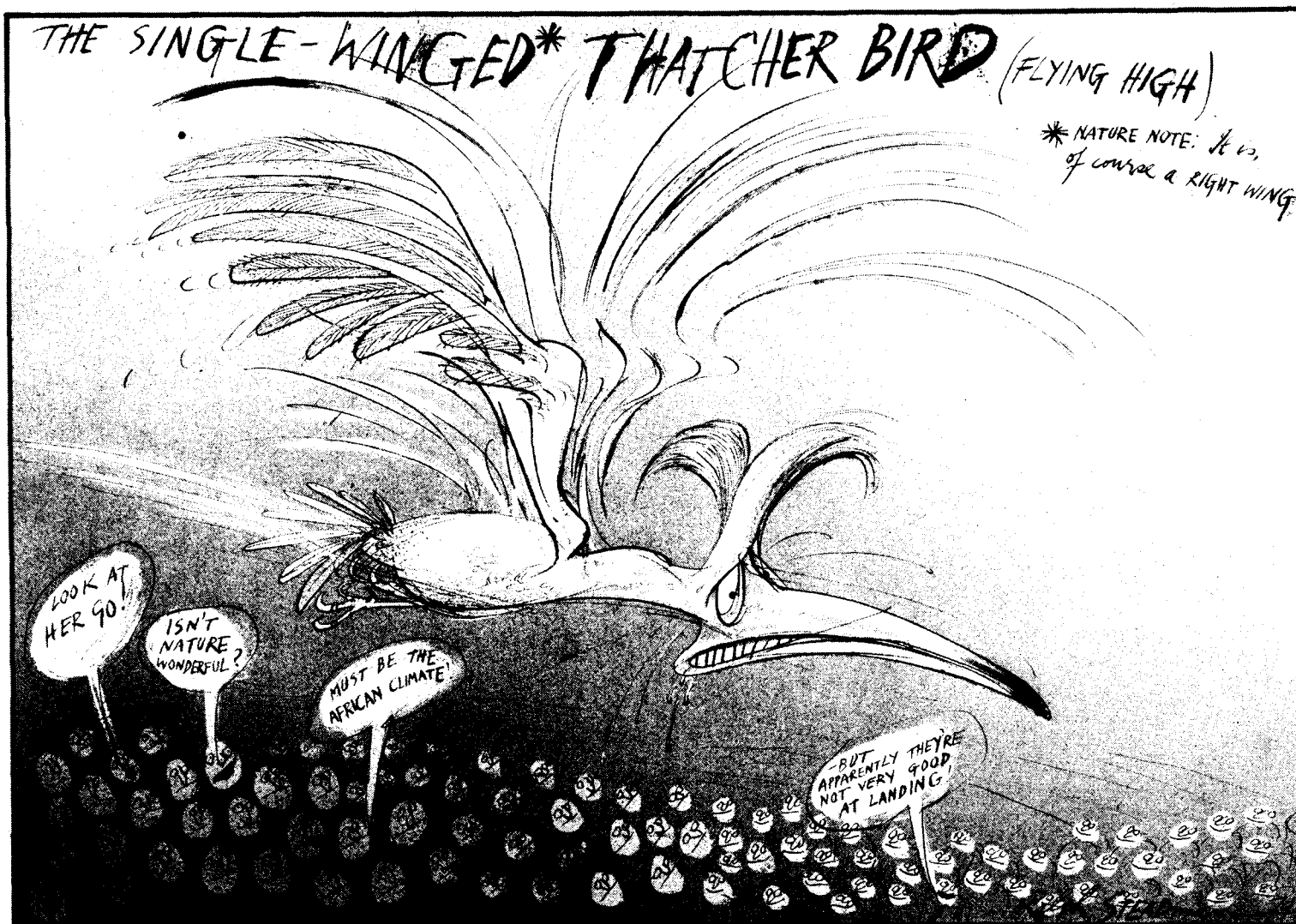
The structure of ITV was designed to provide a different type of programming from that of the BBC. It was to be regional, financed by advertising, and it would provide programmes of particular interest to each area. The Annan Committee considered that all ITV companies 'should regard the provision of programmes for their region as their main obligation', and the ITV Companies' Associ-

ation, ITCA, have reacknowledged this obligation. They told Annan that regional programmes accounted for two thirds of ITV's total production and represented *the essential aspect* of independent television. But there is a history of failure by some of the companies to match that stated commitment in their programmes.

The most publicised example has been in the Midlands - a large area at present covered by Lord Grade's ATV. A group supported by local MPs, including Phillip Whitehead, is making a rival bid for the eastern part of the region because they believe ATV has failed to give it due coverage. In 1978 ATV indicated its awareness of these pressures by opening offices in Oxford and Nottingham.

In the Northwest of England and North Wales Granada TV is also vulnerable. One policy it has adopted, as have other companies, is to use local programmes as training grounds for all levels of staff. Journalists are hired more for their future use to the company than for what they can offer in terms of local knowledge and expertise. Granada has to cover two large and very different cities, Manchester and Liverpool, plus a huge rural area from the Lake District to Anglesey. It's been Liverpool - fourth largest city in Britain - where criticism has rightly been most vocal. Granada's studios are in Manchester and up to now all programmes have been made there. But this summer a Granada studio has been built in Liverpool.

It is not too cynical to see this investment, along with the worthy series of late-night seminars on Liverpool, as sweeteners for the local people and the IBA. Says Allan Roberts MP: 'Granada are



NOTES

bending over backwards now to improve their coverage of Liverpool.' He also points out that what little coverage there is goes to the City of Liverpool while other major areas of Merseyside, such as Birkenhead, are virtually ignored.

We can now expect to see all the companies indulge in an orgy of self-congratulation over their regional coverage. But it will take more than that to convince the IBA – and the viewers.

New hope in Britain's longest strike

Max Madden writes: Union officials are making another bid to settle Britain's longest-running strike, at the Sanderson Forklift Company in Croft, Lincolnshire. More than 40 members of the Transport and General Workers' Union struck when a shop steward elect was sacked in May 1977, and there has been a continuous picket of the plant ever since.

Barry Cooper, TGWU district secretary, has now written to Sanderson shopfloor employees inviting them to join the union. He says he has received enquiries from the workers about union membership, as well as reports of considerable dissatisfaction. Applications for membership will, he says, be treated with the strictest confidence and prospective members, if the response is sufficient, will be invited to an early meeting with Ron Todd, the TGWU national organiser. Mr Cooper adds: 'The meeting will decide the appropriate course of action to be taken, but the prime objective will be to resolve the dispute by negotiation, not to prolong it. Union cards will be issued to all applicants on the successful completion of this action.'

Mr. Roy Sanderson, the managing director of Sanderson's, is seen by many as a fine example of a self-made entrepreneur. His grandfather was a blacksmith, his father a joiner. Mr. Sanderson now

employs more than 100 workers. Opposite his factory complex stands his very imposing home, with its two cars. Another building houses his two-seater plane.

It was on 16 May 1977, that Mr. Phillip Gillatt, the shop steward elect, was sacked – and 43 fellow unionists walked out on strike. Mr. Gillatt applied to an industrial tribunal against unfair dismissal; he eventually received £2,500 compensation. Since then the strikers have mounted an around-the-clock picket, while Mr. Gillatt has driven 60,000 miles to tell people about the strike.

'Of course, we have thought about ending the picket,' one of the older strikers confessed. 'But how can we call it a day after all this time?' The pickets, who receive just £6 a week strike pay, bear no grudges against strikers who have left. 'It was just impossible for some people to take it. You've no idea of the pressures.'

One of the strikers plays darts regularly with a company worker. 'We've had quite a few from inside ask us if they can join the union. We used to get a bit of stick as they went by, but all that has stopped. I met one of the workers at a wedding recently and he told me things were rough,' said one of the younger pickets. The company has been blacked by the TGWU from shows and exhibitions – and international union cooperation prevents the company from exhibiting abroad.

Where have all the Argentinians gone?

Christopher Roper writes: When the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights visits Argentina next week, the question it will most insistently seek to answer is what has happened to the 15,000–30,000 people who have simply disappeared since the military coup in March 1977. It is very well established, despite official denials, that

they were detained by the Argentine security forces as part of the generalised campaign of repression aimed against trade unions and left-wing parties.

What is not certain is what happened next. Are the 'disappeared' still alive in a limbo of concentration camps and detention centres? Or have they been murdered in cold blood? American intelligence sources suggest that only 1,500–2,000 remain alive. Others fear that even this may overstate the number of survivors.

The Argentine military junta has been steadily feeding this fear over the past few months. In May, General Jorge Viola, the commander-in-chief of the Army, said that the relatives of the 'disappeared', who have kept up a brave and unceasing campaign for information and for the re-appearance of their families, should get used to the fact that they had gone for ever. He did not elaborate, but this was a new admission. The Argentine military had previously denied there were any disappeared. They put it all down to the 'international campaign of calumny' against Argentina, and said that people who disappeared were guerrillas using false names who had switched identities. General Albano Harguindeguy, minister of the interior since the coup and chief of police before that, went even further last week. He said that the government was preparing a law, which would permit a person 'to be considered dead if he or she had disappeared'. This astonishing telescoping of normal judicial procedures would allow the dependants of such a person to collect social security benefits, pension rights, and even to secure the execution of the will of the disappeared person.

General Harguindeguy appears to be admitting to the murder of between 15,000 and 30,000 political prisoners, depending on whose estimate you accept, and also to be blandly claiming the right to summarily execute any suspect without any legal formality.

He claimed that this would greatly ease the situation of the relatives of the 'disappeared', whose

protests have become an increasing embarrassment to the Argentine government. In fact, the United States government recently instructed its embassy in Buenos Aires to discover whether there could possibly be large concentration camps holding thousands of political prisoners. There are strong rumours of the existence of at least one such camp in southern Argentina. Protests against the Argentine government have reached a new crescendo in the United States, partly because of the imminent mission of the Inter-American Human Rights commission, and partly because the Argentine government last week shut all the offices of the different human rights organisations in Buenos Aires. These included church groups, a committee of relatives of the disappeared, a group affiliated to the communist party, and even the centrist permanent assembly for human rights.

The military government's tough line and the intervention of the United States have led to a sharp deterioration in relations between Buenos Aires and Washington. One important consequence may be that Washington will withdraw its support for the re-election of the Argentine secretary general of the Organisation of American States, Alejandro Orfila.

The Soviet Union is less fussy than the United States. Last week, a Swedish film dealing with the plight of political detainees and their families in Argentina was shown during a film festival in Moscow, prompting the withdrawal of the official Argentine delegation. The Soviet authorities apologised to the Argentine embassy for hurting their feelings by permitting the screening of the film. At the same time, a Soviet military mission in Buenos Aires was putting the finishing touches to an agreement for military cooperation between the two countries.

More will eventually be known, but it is worth

setting out some of the scraps of information we already have:

- Many mutilated and manacled bodies have been washed ashore on to Argentine and Uruguayan beaches;
- A prisoner who was released testified that she saw manacled prisoners being loaded on to a plane, apparently for transfer to another deten-

tion centre. She heard a new guard ask another where the prisoners were being taken: 'To be food for the fishes' was the chilling reply.

- President Videla boasted to a Spanish general at the time of the state visit to Argentina of King Juan Carlos last year that the best way to 'get rid of subversive riff raff' was to throw them out of air planes into the sea.

FREE SPEECH

Widening the communication gap

ONE OF THE FEW passages in the Conservative Party manifesto which met with general approval was the declaration that the Tories would encourage the improvement of factory-based language training. However, a Parliamentary answer to me just before the recess, which sidestepped the assurance I had sought that industrial language training would be spared the cuts, suggests that the manifesto commitment may simply have been inserted to soften up the section on immigration.

It isn't easy to make a special case for exemption from cuts. But a cutback in on-the-job language training just now would wreck months of careful planning and effort by the National Centre for Industrial Language Training and by the Manpower Services Commission, which now funds the programme.

Providing the necessary training in the many major industries employing immigrants,

especially Asians, is a huge task. The MSC aim is for 40-50,000 immigrants to receive in-company training by 1987 – out of an estimated 200,000 who could do with it. Supervisors, shop stewards and managers will all have related training. The Employment Department's Race Relations Advisory Group took a special interest in the subject, and representatives from both the TUC and CBI were enthusiastic for progress.

Now, it seems, that progress may be thwarted. The 'communication gap' is often blamed for many of the troubles of British industry, but it is immeasurably worsened in a multi-racial workforce when language is an extra barrier between worker and management and worker and worker. Human relations apart, the resulting problems are of increasing economic importance.

John Grant

John Grant, MP for Islington Central and an opposition employment spokesman, was Under Secretary of State for Employment in the Labour government.

EDUCATION

Wasting the talents of 30,000 young people

IF THE WARNING given to universities by the University Grants Committee is justified – that the Government's public spending axe will slice the number of new students admitted in autumn 1980 by six per cent – it will accelerate a trend that is already under way in higher and further education.

In January 1979, the Labour Government's Expenditure White Paper slowed the rate of increase for the number of places it was prepared to fund from 1981 onwards – on the grounds that demand for places was not as high as expected. A six per cent cut would reverse rather than slow down the machine that provides a growing number of suitably qualified 18-year-olds with a higher education, just at the time when the sixties 'bulge' children are reaching 18.

It is estimated that the cut will mean 4,500 lost places. That, in turn, will mean a 14,000 shortfall in the number of university places needed to accommodate the 1980s bulge. Add the 5,000 polytechnic applicants who are also expected to be turned away and the pool of wasted talent rises to the 20,000 mark. By 1981, it will be 30,000. Many of the places lost will be for learning key vocational skills, and people wanting to retrain for new careers in the future will be disappointed.

Ironically, Government thinking seems to be that 'soft' (learning for its own sake) courses in arts and sociology will be swept away, leaving scope for encouraging more practical and vocational courses. But policy decisions in other sectors of further and higher education show the axe striking indiscriminately. As increasing numbers of 18-year-olds seek courses that more certainly yield a job, they will simply be frustrated.

In June, the £1.5 million cut in the budget of the Social Science Research Council has meant 25 per cent fewer SSRC-sponsored places in 300 university departments for this autumn. Many would have produced professional economists. Some 450 studentships and 59 bursaries have disappeared leaving promising students high and dry. Many had already rejected other funded places to take up an SSRC place.

Last month's cut of £110 million in the budget for

the Manpower Services Commission has meant a ten per cent lopping of the Training Opportunities Programme (TOPS) which provides grant aid to over-18s for further education and training. The effect for the 1979/80 academic year is predictable.

One potential student, 26-year-old Paul Glatt, had applied for a TOPS grant having been offered a place through the Institute of Administrative Management on a business studies course at an FE college. In May, he gave up his job having been assured that the awarding of the grant was a formality. But the number of TOPS-sponsored places at the college was cut from 9 to 3. At the end of July, Paul heard that his grant application had been rejected – specifically, he was informed, because of the public spending cuts. He is now unemployed.

Meanwhile, the teaching unions are cranking up for the long fight against the education cuts. This week, the National Union of Teachers publishes its pamphlet *The Case Against the Cuts* which argues in detail that the cuts comprehensively fail to yield up the benefits claimed by the Tory Government and that the education system, having suffered cuts totalling some £1,463 million over the last six years, cannot sustain further withdrawals of finance.

The NUT campaign will be joined next month by a campaign backed by the Child Poverty Action Group and the Advisory Centre for Education. They are taking on the issue of the proposed end of statutory services such as school meals, milk and transport; providing information on how the cuts are hurting and how to fight them at local level. With the recently published plans of the National Union of Public Employees advising members on how to fight the cuts – for example, through disruption of classes by delaying the serving of school meals – the only standards the Tories have raised so far are those of their adversaries going into battle.

NUSS – more militant at last?

THE RECENT national conference of the National Union of School Students (NUSS) made a substantial shift in its future direction. More left and more

militant is how the new group of four full-time officials describe the change. NUSS has a lot of ground to make up – heavily in debt to the National Union of Students, a steady drop in membership from 20,000 to under 4,000, a poorly used grant from the Gulbenkian Foundation to fund a magazine.

The first need is to raise the membership to a level that allows the Union to become more representative and more credible. That should also help to build up funds for more effective administration, for the production of actionpacks on how to build up an NUSS branch and how to campaign, and for restarting its magazine *Blot*. All three editions of *Blot* to date created strong criticism, including from within NUSS itself. Many NUSS members felt that the issues covered were right but the way they were covered was not: messy layout, hard to read, poor articles, and contributions from the membership low. The Gulbenkian grant won't be repeated and there is now a fund-drive through student unions to raise £400 to bring out further editions.

The conference established three main aims – the abolition of corporal punishment, the right to organise in schools (many heads ban both meetings and publicity), and the need to fight the education cuts.

A secondary aim is to end army and police recruitment drives in schools. With a growing number of school-leavers going straight into unemployment, NUSS regards such an upfront recruitment policy as little short of blackmail.

NUSS intends to work through a series of national campaigns to increase public awareness of the union and its aims, to develop contacts with trade unions, and to support teacher and ancillary worker strike action for better pay or against the cuts. The National Union of Teachers refuses to acknowledge the existence of NUSS – to the point of not attending any meeting where NUSS is present – considering it to be 'unnecessary'. NUSS wants other non-teaching unions to put pressure on the teachers to reverse their current policy and accept that at least with the cuts they have a common cause.

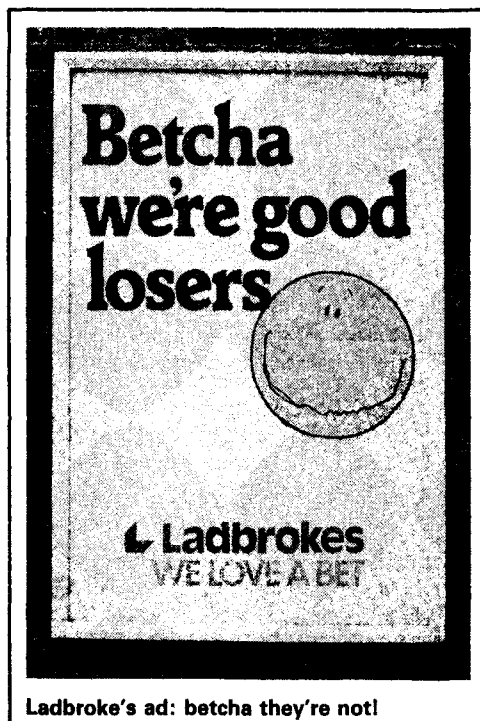
Rick Rogers

How Britain's bookmakers were outwitted, but saved their shirts **Heads they win, tails you lose**

EVERYONE LIKES to have an occasional flutter. And many of us bet rather more often than that: 40 per cent of British adults are regular gamblers. Most gamble with their local bookmaker, on greyhound or horse racing, but probably few are aware that if their bet is successful a bookmaker can quite easily refuse payment of winnings – and the gambler is then virtually powerless to do anything about it. British punters usually act as individuals, and no pressure group or association exists to represent their interests. Following a recent incident, however, some gamblers have decided to take on the over-mighty bookmakers; in the process they have exposed just how ludicrous is the claim that 'market forces' are the only control that is needed over the large betting firms.

On 27 May 1978, a Bank Holiday Monday, an elaborate plan to outwit the major bookmaking organisations was executed at Rochester greyhound-racing stadium and at betting offices around the country. At the centre of the scheme were two dogs, named Rathasker Stuart and Band Major, who were entered in an event known as the 'Long and Short Trip Stakes'. This involved two heats in which greyhounds sprinted over 277 metres, and then a final, run over 901 metres. The greyhounds had been renamed Leysdown Pleasure and Leysdown Fun respectively – which was perfectly legitimate under regulation of the National Greyhound Racing Committee, but which did mean that few punters at the track knew of the greyhounds' ability. The two greyhounds thus started their separate heats at 33-1 and 4-1 respectively. Both dogs romped home.

Little money was invested in the greyhounds with the on-course bookies at Rochester. However, the on-course starting prices constitute the odds which the major bookmakers pay in their betting offices throughout the country. Bank Holidays are a particular source of worry to bookmakers, with the profusion of meetings from which many betting reports and returns cannot be obtained until the day's events are over. On this occasion they failed to notice that the organisers of the coup had been quietly backing these two obscure greyhounds at offices all round Britain, and were thus unaware that their liabilities for two minor races at Rochester were inordinately large. Had they noticed, they would have sought to reduce their commitments by placing money on the greyhounds in question at the course in order to reduce the returned starting price; this is normal practice in bookmaking, and a powerful weapon in the bookmakers' armoury. On this occasion, however, their information ser-



vice had failed them. They were naturally horrified to discover the following day that they had total liabilities of well over £300,000 to pay out on what became known as 'The Rochester Coup'.

The bookmakers, as they are prone to do when forced to pay out large sums of money, immediately claimed that what had occurred was illegal. They therefore felt able to refuse payment on the wagers that had been received. Amazingly, they are quite within their rights to do so, since English law does not recognise gambling debts, and anyone owed money over a wager cannot resort to litigation. This situation dates from the 19th century, when the courts were overburdened with resolving wrangles between gamblers. After the 1845 Gaming Act, which rendered all gambling debts as unenforceable by law, wagers came to be viewed as private transactions to be resolved by the participants.

It is important to note that all wagers in licensed betting offices must be paid for in cash. This was a provision of the 1960 Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act, and it means that licensed betting offices cannot experience problems of debt collection. It is only when a bookmaker refuses to pay out that the implications of non-enforcement of gambling debts become apparent.

THE NATIONAL GREYHOUND Racing Committee investigated the bookmakers'

allegations and found that the entry and running of both dogs breached no rule of greyhound racing. The police also carried out an investigation into the affair, and submitted a report to the Director of Public Prosecutions, who decided to take no action against the gamblers. Still the major bookmakers refused to pay out on the Rochester debts. Some smaller firms did pay, however, possibly because they had lower liabilities than those who continued to refuse, and they could obtain good publicity by 'honourably' paying their debts. The Betting Office Licensees Association (BOLA), which represents the large betting firms such as Ladbrokes, Hills, Corals and Mecca, felt no obligation to stump up.

In such a situation there is normally little more a client can do. Tight government regulations exist in the day-to-day running of other forms of gambling, such as casinos, bingo and lotteries, which come under the auspices of the Gaming Board. Bookmaking on greyhound and horse racing is largely free from government control, because of the dubious notion that 'free enterprise' will ensure equity in gambling markets.

This notion is some way from reality. Due to their financial strength, the major bookmakers in BOLA can offer far greater limits on winnings than smaller companies. But competition between the major firms themselves is barely noticeable. The big bookmakers, as members of BOLA, always discuss any new measures and, if accepting them, tend to implement them on a uniform basis; it has been suggested that the big four offer virtually identical services, and such allegations have led the Office of Fair Trading to launch an inquiry into all aspects of the bookmaking industry in this country.

When the bookies refused to pay out on the Rochester Coup, attempts were made by John Eldridge, a member of the group of gamblers who had placed the bets, to initiate negotiations. He acted as a spokesman for the other members of the group, who chose to remain anonymous, but he received no joy from the bookmakers and after a year's wait for payment, the group decided to take drastic measures. The method they hit upon was original, effective and wholly illegal. The group began to make early morning trips to licensed betting offices owned by the firms who continued to hold out. They filled the doorlocks to the offices with a powerful new superglue. The managers of these offices would arrive to find the locks jammed solid, and would be unable to gain entry to carry out their business.

The bookmakers, alarmed by the possible threat to their profits, quickly employed



squads of 'flying locksmiths' and increased their security measures. The police also took an interest, starting an investigation under Det. Insp. Ellison of Scotland Yard's Serious Crimes Squad. All this failed to deter the group, however, and BOLA is now offering a £5,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of the 'glue gang'. One of the reasons for the bookmakers' rising concern was that their business does not only consist of betting offices: numerous other commercial enterprises are owned by companies represented by BOLA and if, say, their department stores were kept from trading the firms would suffer serious losses.

MEANWHILE John Eldridge had been negotiating with the bookmakers on behalf of the group. There is no suggestion that he is involved in the glue campaign, since he has always attempted to use reason with the bookmakers (who, as a breed, do not appear particularly susceptible to rational discussion). The anonymous spokesman of the glue gang has been in telephone contact with the special

features writer of *The Sporting Life* newspaper, John McCririck. *The Sporting Life* is the leading racing paper in this country, and in its editorials and articles by McCririck it has supported the claims of the gamblers involved in the Rochester group. *The Sporting Life* is an accepted authority in the gambling fraternity on the resolution of betting disputes; in this case, however, the bookies chose to ignore the paper's views.

While condemning the illegal glue-sticking activity, the paper has published the views of the telephone representative of the gang, who called the major bookmakers 'dictators' and added: 'They treat the punters with contempt - as though they are stupid idiots. It seems they need pay only when they decide, and now they are delaying over arbitration.' This was a reference to a proposed arbitration before a judge. The bookmakers are reluctant to go to arbitration - they originally refused to go at all - and it was only as a result of pressure brought by the claimants and the media that hearings in the presence of a judge were decided upon. Even so, the hearings have

been consistently delayed.

The glue-stickers have been condemned by the bookmakers and the press, but there is no doubt that they have attracted considerable sympathy from many gamblers who have come to realise the extent of the privilege which makes it possible for the bookies to refuse payment. The planning and execution of the Rochester Coup was meticulous. No law or rule of racing was breached and it appears that the bookmakers were, quite simply, outwitted. It is a testimony to the power and organisation of the major firms that they are so rarely 'done' in such spectacular fashion, but it also says something about the state of betting law (and the lack of 'honour' in the industry) that when the bookies are outfoxed they are able to withhold payment. Even Detective Inspector Ellison appears to have lost patience with the bookmakers' attitude. Whether they are ultimately forced to pay or not, for the first time the bookies have experienced the possible effect of organised action by punters. They seem not to enjoy the experience.

CATHOLICISM 1 Mary Holland

The Pope's Irish visit is a masterly exercise in political consolidation

A Holy Roman Ireland

MRS ELFRIEDE GOURLEY, a member of the Legion of Mary, has made an appeal to the people of Ireland to show their appreciation of Pope John Paul II's visit next month by presenting him with a million rosaries. Not a million sets of rosary beads, which might present some customs problems when the Pope proceeds to New York, but a 'spiritual bouquet' of rosaries to be said by the faithful between now and the date of the Pope's arrival, 29 September. Mrs Gourley has volunteered to log up the rosaries, and pledge forms undertaking to say a certain number may be found in the current issue of *The Irish Catholic*.

A Jesuit priest, commending the campaign in a Dublin evening paper, goes on to suggest that if the Irish people can reach the target of a million rosaries and thereby demonstrate to the Pope our devotion to the Virgin Mary, we may even achieve the sublime aim of getting the invocation 'Our Lady Queen of Ireland' added to the litany of the Virgin Mary.

The three day visit is to cost an estimated £2 million, a modest enough sum when you consider that it will include mass to be said for a million people on an acre of carpet in the Phoenix Park and that every Irish-born bishop in the world, as well as the entire hierarchy of England, Scotland, and Wales are to be invited to Ireland for the festivities.

Already the less edifying aspects of the Pope's visit are to be seen in the Irish newspapers, where advertisements, many of them by British firms, are urging readers to buy gold medallions, glass mirrors in which the Pope's head appears bathed in light, papal bunting and copper etchings of the Holy Father with arms outstretched embracing various Irish shrines and maps of Ireland.

It is, I must confess immediately, almost totally counterproductive to describe all this in the NEW STATESMAN. The reaction of almost any Irish Catholic, however firmly lapsed, on reading it will be one of anger at a British left-wing atheistic publication sneering at simple Irish piety. But it is necessary to set the scene for what has already become a



Sanctity and saccarin collide at Knock - collecting Holy Water at the shrine.

masterly exercise in political consolidation by the Catholic Church in Ireland, posing as a simple religious festival.

British socialists, not to mention the liberal media, face a problem over the Pope's visit. The most obvious reason for it is to give pastoral recognition to Ireland's unflinching loyalty to the Catholic Church even when this brought in its wake centuries of hardship, discrimination and suffering. Since most of that discrimination and suffering was imposed by Britain, it may be a little difficult for British commentators concerned with Ireland to question or criticise the Pope's visit. For this reason it has been simpler to confine any public discussion of the visit to the question of whether John Paul II should venture north. But even if the Pope does not cross the border (and rumours of a helicopter trip to Derry remain persistent) his schedule has already been devised with a crass disregard for the sensitivities of both Northern and Southern

Protestants.

Apart from Dublin the Pope will visit other major centres in the Republic, but the highlight of his three day visit will be a trip to the shrine of the Virgin Mary in Knock in the West of Ireland. Knock is a remote village in Co Mayo where, 100 years ago this month, a number of the villagers claimed to have seen an apparition of Mary, the mother of Jesus, on the gable end of their church. For many years Knock, with its overtones of peasant superstition, was something of an embarrassment to the Irish hierarchy. No official recognition was given to the villagers' claims although there was a somewhat grudging acceptance that any shrine where the Mother of God was venerated - and Ireland abounds in such places of pilgrimage - should not be discouraged.

THESE reservations have long since disappeared. Last week five Cardinals - one Irish, three American, and one Scot - came to

Knock to celebrate the shrine's official centenary, and on Irish television the news-reader informed viewers, as a matter of incontrovertible fact, that Our Lady appeared at Knock 100 years ago. Next month the Pope himself will arrive to give the final seal of approval.

The effect of all this on Northern Protestants, at a time when some of the more rational are trying to think of political ways to live with their Southern neighbours, is all too painfully easy to imagine. The Reverend Ian Paisley has been handed all the cards he needs for the next few rounds of play. But at least as important are the likely effects of the visit in the South. Contrary to what I may seem to have described above, the past decade in Ireland has seen a slow but steady progress towards a more liberal and pluralist society. There has been a growing acceptance, particularly among the young, that the separation of Church and State is positively desirable. The bishops know this very well, and the most forthright among them have denounced the advance towards a secular state as something to be resisted at all costs. It is in this context that the papal visit, and the scenes of mass emotion/simple piety which accompany it, should be seen.

In a perceptive, if tactfully understated article in the *Irish Press*, the paper's religious affairs correspondent, T. P. O'Mahony, drew some instructive parallels between the coming papal visit and the last religious manifestation of a similar nature on Irish soil – the Eucharistic Congress of 1932. At that time too the Church had some cause for concern about the way things were going in Ireland. Eamonn De Valera's Fianna Fail had just formed its first government. Many of them were ex-IRA men who had only lately laid down their guns after

a protracted civil war. At that time they were perceived as dangerously radical and some of them were known to be bitterly anti-clerical because of the way the majority of the hierarchy had condemned the IRA throughout the struggle against the British for independence. Not all of them welcomed the Eucharistic Congress but few of them could ignore the political lessons from the scenes of mass emotion that accompanied it. As one historian put it: 'It was a fairly important step in the development of the consciousness of being a Catholic state.' In due course that consciousness was formalised in Mr De Valera's constitution of 1937, which enshrined a special relationship between the new state and the Catholic Church and paved the way for the Church's continuing influence in Irish politics.

IN RECENT YEARS, however, that relationship has been slowly but firmly eroded. This has often been difficult for outsiders to perceive because of the singular way the Irish, and particularly Irish politicians, go about these matters. The Church is still powerful and much revered. Most politicians are either themselves believing Catholics or, as important, they represent an electorate which is 97 per cent Catholic. Thus one gets a situation as with the recent Bill to legalise the sale of contraceptives, which, in its efforts to accommodate all points of view, has made Ireland a laughing stock in the world's liberal media. The Bill, with its references to bona fide family planners, is riven with absurdities and worse, but at least a start has been made. The sale of contraceptives will finally be legal.

There are other signs that the old Catholic certainties are going – the growing acceptance of broken marriages and the pressure for

some form of civil divorce, the number of parents who want to send their children to schools not controlled by the Church, the debate about the North and the realisation that compromises will have to be made if the South is really serious about accommodating Northern Protestants. Most eloquent of all has been the new discretion of the Catholic hierarchy, at least until recently, on such issues, and the public stance that the bishops do not believe that the moral teaching of the Catholic Church should necessarily be incorporated in the laws of the state.

This is not to say that the Irish bishops have lost any of their determination that Catholic Ireland shall remain Catholic and that their flock must be protected from the infection of secularism. The 3 per cent of Protestants in the Southern population will be tolerated, even honoured on public occasions, but their status will remain that of guests in a Catholic nation. There has been much talk of ecumenism and generosity but on such crucial issues as the Irish hierarchy's attitude to mixed marriages, which is the most conservative in Europe, there has been no move, nor is there likely to be. On this and similar issues the new primate, Cardinal Tomas O Fiach, a man of convivial personal charm and a thoroughgoing conservative, can be relied on to be as inflexible as any of his predecessors.

Since the announcement of the Pope's visit we have been hearing rather a lot from the bishops about the lack of moral leadership in Ireland and the dangers of an affluent society. This will doubtless reach a crescendo when the man himself arrives on 29 September. The message that goes out from the million strong mass in the Phoenix Park is likely to be simple and unequivocal – Ireland Holy and Roman, a Catholic State for a Catholic Nation.

CATHOLICISM 2
Judith Condon

The bishops' threat to Maltese women

Fighting for the right to choose

ON 6 JUNE a young woman gave birth to a child she did not want high up in a building on St Patrick's Street in Valletta, the capital of Malta. Nathalie Pisani, 24 years old, in a state of who can imagine what despair, took her child and threw it from a window on to the pavement below. Now she stands trial for manslaughter. Nothing could demonstrate more tragically the plight of the desperate pregnant woman in a society which denies her the means to control her own fertility and in which recently announced government plans to introduce family planning clinics are being bitterly fought by the Catholic Church which, with its authority enshrined in the constitution, has held unchallenged sway over the hearts and minds of the people for centuries. In Malta abortion is still illegal, contraception hard to come by and even one generation ago families of fifteen and twenty children were commonplace.

When prime minister Dom Mintoff – whose Labour government has only a slender parliamentary majority – announced the family planning centres plan in July, there was an outcry from the Church and the right wing. The conservative *Sunday Times of Malta* condemned him as a demagogue and infidel for daring to proclaim his heresy on the very day that Malta's archbishop published a pastoral letter reiterating the Church's opposition to contraception. The issue of birth control is

being seen as an important trial of strength in the battle to secularise Maltese society as, although the government has done much in the last few years to improve the position of women, much remains to be done. There are civil marriages, a national health service and child benefits, but equal pay exists very much on paper, there is no divorce, women civil servants are banned from marrying and there are only two women members of parliament.

The bishops and the Labour Party are old adversaries. In the elections of 1962 and 1966 the Church joined forces with the other political parties to defeat Labour. It was declared a mortal sin to vote Labour or even to abstain. Women were told that in the event of their husbands making them swear an oath to vote Labour, the Church would absolve them from the oath. Election meetings were disrupted by the faithful and church bells rang to drown the message of socialism – one of the few times, Mintoff later remarked, they had ever been rung without a fee being paid. The Archbishop stopped only one step short of excommunicating Mintoff and his executive, and leading Labourites who died in the sixties were denied burial in consecrated ground, being buried instead in the Misbla (in English, 'rubbish dump') cemetery.

Despite this, little by little the Church's ascendancy is being whittled away. Beaming Mintoff posters bristle alongside the shrines

and religious mottos that speckle the streets. In the cabs of the ubiquitous ancient green buses the religious statutes are jostled by those latter day international idols, Starsky and Hutch. Factories rival the cathedral-sized parish churches as the largest buildings on the horizon.

The bishops' fear is that if they dig their heels in over the family planning clinics it could provoke the government into withdrawing their special status in the constitution. But the reformers' fear is that even if the clinics open without uproar women will be shamed into staying away: under-subscribed clinics would be an important victory for the Church and would make the battle for abortion even harder. But whatever the outcome of the present battle, it comes too late for people like Nathalie Pisani. Such is the climate of opinion in Malta, not even the socialist press dare include editorial comment with reports of her story. No one has said that this is the price of keeping women in ignorance. There will be no banners supporting her outside the court.

BINDERS

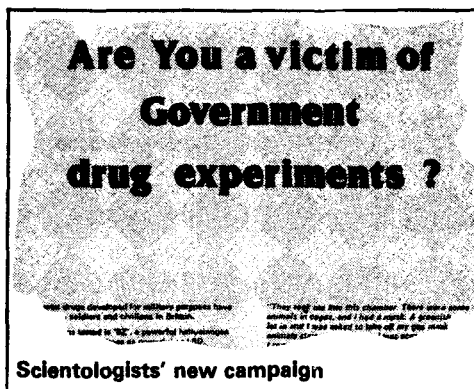
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The army's bloodless warfare

ONE CANNOT HELP feeling that the Church of Scientology's exposure of the presence of BZ patents in the British Library is an attempt to gain publicity at the expense of an institution which has been the subject of some criticism in the past year for having other chemical warfare compounds in open reference. BZ is the code name for the hallucinogen 3-quinuclidinyl benzilate, adopted as an incapacitating agent by the US Army in the early Sixties. At the time there was intensive research into incapacitants – both physiological and psychological – for their possible uses as bloodless weapons. One of the main criteria for a military incapacitant was relative safety, the sense of a ratio between its effective dosage (the amount necessary to induce the desired effect) and the lethal dosage. The higher the lethal dosage in comparison to the effective dosage, the more suitable the agent.

Although the Scientologists have made much noise about the estimate that 35 grams of BZ would be enough to kill 1000 people – and this figure is based on the *lowest* estimate of BZ's lethal dosage – one of the reasons for the agent's selection was that the ratio was high enough for effective use as an incapacitant without endangering life. Compared with the highly lethal toxin and nerve agents (known as V-agents), such as kicin sarin and VX, BZ is relatively harmless – although its psychological and physical effects are another matter.

The mental effects of BZ are similar to those of LSD, although they tend to last longer. For the past few years there have been continual reports of tests on troops in this country and the US with LSD and other hallucinogens. The Scientologists have been making much capital out of the fact that BZ was also tested, but the information – while disturbing – is not especially surprising considering what is already known. To link the genuine issue of experimenting on humans with the largely false one of BZ specifications



in the British Library and Patent Office can only be based on a desire for PR for its own sake.

Despite the suggestions of the Scientologists, the *Daily Mirror* and the *Guardian*, the manufacture of BZ has never been secret. Although a US Army patent for it was classified between 1962 and 1975 – when it was published along with nerve gases and other military incapacitants – recipes for BZ (under another chemical name) have been openly available in patent files since the mid-1950s. The *Guardian* and the *Daily Mirror* reported that BZ had been described as 10-100 times as powerful as LSD. The source for this was presumably the Scientologists, and that it was introduced more for drama than for accuracy. The US Army report on BZ upon which the Scientologists base many of their arguments provides an estimate of the minimal effective BZ dosage as being 0.0025 milligrams per kilogram of body weight for 'mental performance degradation'. One source puts the incapacitating dosage of LSD at 0.002 milligrams per kilogram and BZ at 0.03. While all these figures are highly dependent on the experiment and the means of administering the agent, it is still difficult to see how BZ can be described as 100 times as 'powerful' as LSD – or in what sense the word is meant. Interestingly enough LSD was prefer-

red as a chemical warfare agent but was then rejected because of its high production costs.

BZ is now being phased out of the US arsenal and the Army report by the Scientologists was compiled as a reference for the disposal of BZ without causing an environmental hazard – something that did not come out in the press coverage. Unfortunately, getting rid of large stocks of a chemical warfare agent safely can be far more difficult than making the stuff in the first place. There have been problems before with the disposal of nerve and mustard agents.

Whatever one feels about the use of hallucinogenic agents as weapons, it is clearly beside the point that one can buy a copy of the patent for 18p. The Minister for the Arts is currently studying the serious problem of V-agent patents which are in the British Library, and will be replying to inquiries from Labour MP Bruce Douglas-Mann in the near future. BZ has been the subject of several patents from civilian companies as well as the military, has been available for over 20 years and is only one of dozens of similar hallucinogens patented or described in the technical literature. The V-agents – at least those primarily researched by the military – have only been available for the past four or five years, are not yet extensively discussed in the open literature and are far more lethal than BZ.

To take BZ out of the files would logically require the removal of patents for or technical articles on all similar hallucinogenic compounds – leaving a lot of empty space in the library. On the other hand, the removal of the V-agents involves only the withdrawal of a few patents. Whatever one feels about the withdrawal of any information from public view, there is at least a reasoned case for considering the removal of the V-agent patents. Nothing similar can be said for BZ. It would be unfortunate if the Scientologists' search for publicity was allowed to cloud the more serious issues at hand.

Yamashita's warlike 'defence' plan

ONLY HOURS AFTER THE Japanese Government released a White Paper containing the most toughly-worded military indictment of the Soviet Union issued here since World War Two, I attended a right-wing forum at which a retired Japanese admiral recommended three new strategies for his country. First, he said, Japan should establish a line of defence through South Korea and ally with Korea and Taiwan in defending the sea lanes, since US navy brass has 'repeatedly told Congress it has no surplus power to operate in the Western Pacific'. Second, it should scrap its long-standing policy against getting into the international arms trade and export arms to 'friendly' nations in need. And, third, it should increase military spending to more than one per cent of its trillion dollar gross national product, in order to counter effectively an alleged scheme by the Soviet Union to 'neutralise Japan and West Germany by establishing control over the oil-

producing areas of Africa, the Middle East and Europe' amid 'deterioration of the military balance between the Soviet Union and the United States'.

The admiral's opinions would not only have appealed to a significant portion of the elite of a nation which ruled both Taiwan and South Korea until the end of the Second World War; they also promised relief from current economic duress. The same admiral is a consultant to a major shipbuilding manufacturer and Japan's shipbuilding industry has been labelled 'depressed' after several years of heavy losses. What better way to boost the industry than by selling warships competitively, along with complete weapons systems, to other nations? Home sales could be boosted, too, by encouraging a militarist spirit. The government's Defence Agency is this year ordering three destroyers from the admiral's company – and plans to purchase still more under a new five-year, 13-billion

dollar programme, beginning next year and designed to put Japan's entire 'defence' system on a qualitative level second to none in the world. (The only missing ingredient is nuclear weaponry, for which Japan still depends on the US, although there are murmurings in some quarters that that policy principle might be violated too.)

The admiral's audience included past and present military officers, economic journalists and corporate officials and advisers, most of them from companies with major economic interests in Taiwan or South Korea. One notable guest was an adviser to Nissho-iwai, the trading company whose officials had to endure a six-month investigation for having passed along nearly two and a half million dollars in 'political donations' to win approval of a contract for the purchase of early warning E2C 'Hawkeye' aircraft from America's Grumman Corporation. The company emerged from the investigation with the

Grumman deal intact. The current Director General of the Defence Agency, Ganri Yamashita, has 'unfrozen' the contract and agreed to buy four of the E2Cs by the end of the year, the first in a total of 82 Hawkeyes which the government plans to purchase.

ALMOST DAILY, it seems, government officials conjure some new, sometimes symbolic act to break down the anti-military mood which has prevailed since Hiroshima and Nagasaki. On 6 August, the 34th anniversary of Hiroshima, while 30,000 gathered in the Peace Park in Hiroshima to mourn the event and pray in silence, Yamashita called upon the American Military Commander in Japan at his headquarters on Yokota air base on the western fringes of Tokyo. The visit might have seemed routine unless one recalled the anniversary – and the startling fact that Yamashita was the first chief of the Defence Agency to set foot on a US base in Japan.

The sortie to Yokota was overshadowed, however, by Yamashita's other travels. Just after his government issued its anti-Soviet White Paper, he took a trip to South Korea, for a meeting with Defence Minister No Jae Hyeon. Afterwards, Yamashita claimed merely to have reviewed the balance of forces

in the Korean peninsula, reworking the theme of rising Soviet naval power. Nevertheless, the mission represented a milestone, as the first trip to South Korea by a senior Japanese defence official since the collapse of Japanese imperial rule in August 1945. For more than a millenium, Japan has linked its own security with that of the Korean peninsula, and the trip can only be viewed as a first and decisive step towards fulfilling the demands of the militarists for a defence line through Korea.

In mid-August, Yamashita travelled to Washington to confer with US Defence Secretary Harold Brown on 'problems of mutual concern, including the military situation in Asia and elsewhere in the world'. This trip, too, seems particularly noteworthy since the White Paper criticised the US for letting the Soviet Union rival it 'both in nuclear capability and military position in Europe and the Far East' and advocated 'serious restudy of the present military balance between the two superpowers'. Talking to correspondents and diplomats setting off for the United States, Yamashita had made it clear that he meant to exchange more than the usual banalities with the Americans. The two countries, he said, had arrived in their defence outlook 'at the age of specifics rather than generalities' and

could engage in 'concrete rather than abstract' discussion. Citing a set of 'guidelines' set forth by Japanese and American negotiators last November, he said: 'What we are doing is to enhance and increase the function of the Japan-US security treaty'. From Washington, Yamashita carried his crusade to Western Europe, visiting NATO headquarters and other military facilities before returning to Tokyo last week.

The sudden burst of anti-Soviet publicity in Japan appears as a campaign first to dispel the adverse political impact of the Grumman affair and, second, to ensure smooth passage of the five-year 'defence' programme, despite the government's avowed desire to cut down spending. Even while it is confined to one per cent of GNP, Japan's defence budget ranks sixth or seventh in the world, this year amounting to approximately \$10 billion. Priorities for the five-year programme include a new radar system, medium-altitude Hawk anti-air missiles, F-15 Eagle Interceptors and P-3 Orion anti-submarine aircraft, 39 new ships, including 16 destroyers and five submarines, plus all the tanks, armoured personnel carriers and cannon needed to 'mechanise' an infantry division for deployment in Hokkaido, close to the Soviet Union.

HEALTH

The Third World's deadly pharmaceutical trade

Anna Coote writes: Last October, Sri Lanka's *Family Doctor* magazine, which is distributed to medical practitioners there, ran the following editorial:

WELCOME BACK

Almost every day the newspapers carry advertisements calling for medical detailmen. Private practitioners are besieged by medical representatives and their post boxes are being bombarded by literature from drug firms. Brand names are no longer taboo . . .

THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS BACK

. . . The vigorous healthy competition that is bound to follow is sure to be of benefit to the patient . . .

Family Doctor magazine is sponsored by the US drug company Winthrop and its triumphant words signal the defeat of Sri Lanka's battle to curb the multinationals and bring safe, cheap, home-produced drugs to the people. The story is told in the second half of an excellent Radio Four documentary on drugs and the third world, to be broadcast on Sunday*. It is no secret that the multinationals behave unscrupulously in developing countries, but BBC's Ritchie Cogan, Sharon Banoff and Bill Breckon have accumulated some astonishing new evidence, based on an international survey of health workers.

Third World countries spend huge sums on pharmaceuticals, although most of their health problems are due to malnutrition and poor sanitation, rather than to the ailments for which most western drugs were originally designed. Local health workers are often ignorant of the side effects of drugs they prescribe – which may be published on the package in English, but not in their own language. In Thailand, anyone can buy across the counter a multi-coloured, assorted pack containing a couple of steroids, one or two paracetamol, a few antibiotic capsules and vitamin pills – expensive, attractive, useless and highly dangerous. In Bangladesh, a British doctor overheard a salesman from a US multinational recommending to a local practitioner that he prescribe the diuretic drug frusemide to reduce swellings in a child which had been caused by kwashiorkor, a deficiency disease. When the doctor intervened to protest that the drug would be more likely to kill than cure, the good

merchant replied that the child would die anyway. The US company Pfizer promotes a combined drug of streptomycin and penicillin in Bangladesh as 'an effective and inexpensive remedy for any disease'. Not only has the combination been banned in the US for ten years; but streptomycin is a 'front line' defence against tuberculosis, which is widespread in Bangladesh. Indiscriminate prescription builds up a strain of tuberculosis which is resistant to the drug.

In Sri Lanka, the BBC team discovered anabolic steroids, in liquid form suitable for children, sold over the counter in a pharmacy. The sales literature used by its manufacturer, the US company Winthrop, claimed that it had 'demonstrated beneficial effects' in convalescing children aged between 18 months and seven years 'who were recovering from various ailments'. Anabolic steroids are rigorously

restricted in the States. They are known to produce male sex characteristics in girls and to stunt bone development in boys.

When the Bandaranaike government tried to set up a State Pharmaceutical Company in 1974, the multinationals mounted a furious counter-attack. Asked to hire out its spare capacity to formulate essential drugs for the state, Pfizer failed to cooperate; and when the government then tried to nationalise it, the US ambassador threatened to withdraw US aid from Sri Lanka. At the time there was a cholera epidemic: Pfizer was asked to make up tetracycline tablets – but delayed for so long that the state had to fly in tablets from abroad, at enormous expense, to meet the emergency. After the government changed in 1977, the multinationals were freed once again to ply their deadly trade.

INVITATION TO OVERSEAS READERS

Subscribe to NEW STATESMAN for six months
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William Shawcross's remarkable book *Sideshow* free

Recently the New Statesman serialised *Sideshow*, a remarkable book in which William Shawcross, using records unearthed by the Freedom of Information Act, anatomises the policy which Kissinger and his master Nixon imposed on Cambodia – 'sideshow' was their own contemptuous label for the nation which they visited with the most destructive bombardment in the history of aerial warfare. Having built their policy upon the fantasy that a mortal blow might be dealt to Vietnam by attacking Cambodia, Nixon and Kissinger usurped to themselves the war-making powers which the US Constitution reserves to Congress – thus covertly extending a war which they claimed in public to be ending. To keep their gigantic bombing campaign secret, they so far subverted the command-structure of the USAF that (in one officer's words) anyone who '... punched the right button into the right spot ... could have had us bombing China'.

If you would like to read these extracts from *Sideshow* and receive the NEW STATESMAN for the next six months please send your sterling or dollar cheque or money order to

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*In *Sickness or in Wealth: Drugs and the Third World* (Part Two), BBC Radio Four, Sunday 6.15 pm.

Strong, but not powerful

THE TUC MEETS next week in a state of siege. So successful has been the attack on trade unions that even some activists in the labour movement think that unions are too powerful. But this is to confuse strength with power. The strength of unions in imposing restrictions on employers enables them to win better pay, better conditions and more security – and that is something worth defending. On the other hand, unions have little power. As **BRIAN BURKETT** and **DAVID BOWERS** argue below, the important decisions in a capitalist society are taken without the workers being consulted. In a desire to put this

right the TUC has been absorbed into the corporate state, but, as **DAVID HALL** demonstrates, to little avail. The TUC's economic policy is out of touch with the reality of economic power and with the nature of decision making. As a result, the industrial effectiveness of trade unions has been impaired. **PAUL ROUTLEDGE** examines the prospects of this being reversed at Blackpool. **ANNA COOTE** points out that Congress will waste little time discussing one of the great failings of British trade unionism: to tackle the predominance of men and the subordination of women.

Who controls the levers?

CONFUSION ABOUT THE NATURE of economic power contributes to the widespread illusion of dominant unions. Economic power derives from two sources: first, the ability of individuals and companies to act in the marketplace for reward. Secondly, it is based upon collective organisation. Public discussion concentrates upon this second source and ignores the first. This imbalance is intensified, because union bargaining weapons are mostly deployed in public view. However, power resides in anonymous social institutions as well as identifiable individuals and groups. Indeed it arises more from the routine application of effectively unchallenged assumptions than from domination after public conflict. Once this crucial point is recognised, it becomes unrealistic to distinguish sharply between power exerted through collective organisation and that flowing from market opportunities. And it becomes one-sided to advocate restraint of organised strength without similar control of individual acquisitive ability. Yet such a bias lies at the heart of most public debate about trade unions.

To take one example, incomes policies have restricted the use of union bargaining weapons while leaving virtually uncontrolled the manipulation of market power. To define union activities as 'monopolistic' is unconvincing: unions do not create a privileged position among otherwise equal parties, but seek to develop the bargaining strength of individuals who are in themselves relatively weak. How can the exercise of their collective strength be condemned when the individual use of power by the privileged is not? In contrast to trade unions, capitalists' rarely need to exercise overtly more than a small range of the weapons at their disposal, so that their overall strength often passes unnoticed. The institutions, mechanisms and beliefs crucial to support the position of the privileged already exist, e.g. private enterprise, the pursuits of profit, and the influence of wealth over communications media and industrial decision-making. Owners of resources can create and maintain values favourable to them, which become built-in features of the social structure. Thus control of the content of newspapers by printing unions is widely regarded as a violation of press freedom, although the more comprehensive control exercised daily by editors on behalf of the owners appears to be the natural course of events.

¹We define a capitalist society as one in which the basic dynamic of industry is the provision of profit for its owners and capitalists are the suppliers of finance or paid managers acting on their behalf.

The very weakness of trade unions partially accounts for the illusion of an industrial power balance; unions must marshal all their resources to improve members' wages and working conditions, while capitalists can usually maintain a favourable environment without deploying most of their bargaining weapons. The concept of a balance of power between capitalists and unions fosters the belief that interest groups compete on equal terms for economic rewards. In practice employers and workers can never construct the job environment jointly, because even organised workers accept the managerial shaping of this environment long before collective bargaining begins.

The distribution of income in capitalist economies is largely determined by three inter-related influences: the private ownership of property, the operation of the labour market and the activity of the State. The distribution of income and wealth in Britain still remains unequal in a degree not easily reconciled to the idea of overwhelming trade union power. A complex of influences determine income distribution, in which the actions of capitalists are more significant than those of unions. Unions protect their members from insecurities that threaten the unorganised, but they find it difficult to eat into profits, since firms can react to higher wages by adjusting prices, product quality, production techniques and manpower requirements. Consequently, unions often fail to alter the distribution of money when they push up money wages; for instance, the unprecedented acceleration of money wage increases between 1969 and 1973 raised the proportion of the national income accruing to labour by 1.3 per cent. Union claims were not self-defeating, as claimed by some Conservatives, but their impact on distribution was hardly substantial. As trade unions exercise no control over the price level, this is not surprising.

In a society based upon private enterprise, only slight inroads into companies' surplus are possible without reducing the rate of investment and hence long-run living standards. But the determination of incomes is not evenhanded: capital assets derive from the joint abstinence of capitalists (in the form of saving) and workers (in the form of lower consumption than would otherwise be possible), but even in the presence of strong unions the ownership and control of these assets belong to capitalists alone. In capitalism, workers forgo income not only to make funds available for investment, but also to

provide a commercial rate of return for those making investment decisions.

The contract of employment differs from other contracts in at least two ways. The owners of labour power cannot be dissociated from the services it renders, and the conditions under which it is supplied vary between a multiplicity of business establishments. Therefore, once signed, the employment contract is inherently unequal. Workers cannot change their job conditions without managerial consent, but employers can initiate change unilaterally by issuing orders that they expect to be obeyed. The ownership of capital becomes an instrument of social control and a legally free sale of labour power involves some surrender of workers' freedom. Trade unions respond by attempting to create a code of industrial rights which protects their members in some degree from market fluctuations, technical change and employer decisions.

However, these rights remain limited. Union participation in the regulation of working conditions is essentially defensive, as it occurs within an environment determined by decisions that capitalists have already taken on the scale of production, the location of industry, investment, technology, manning levels, safety and welfare. Even the minority of unions which have acquired substantial control of manpower planning (e.g. newspaper printing) largely react to the consequences of policies being pursued by employers. Moreover, collective agreements are in practice implemented by representatives of the employer, who draw up financial accounts that unions have no independent means of checking. The need for business flexibility, when interpreting general rules, creates the personal and continuous character of authority in firms. By contrast, unions possess little direct influence in most areas of industrial decision-making, although their members' jobs are continually subject to alterations in techniques and consumer demand, which may affect job security and satisfaction.

Trade unions place important constraints of consultation, and sometimes prohibition, upon the autonomy of employers. Arbitrary rule has been replaced in certain industries by jointly agreed rules ensuring consistency of treatment. In recent years the scale of initiatives at shopfloor level has increased with the pace of technical innovations and the complexity of administering large organisations. However, basic policy decisions are still determined by the financial interests of capitalists. Collective bargaining restricts their authority, but to date the distribution of industrial power has yielded little to union activity. Trade unions have acquired a bar-

gaining strength that amounts at most to the ability to frustrate employers' wishes.

IT USED TO BE POPULARLY BELIEVED that Jack Jones was more powerful than the Prime Minister. In fact the ability to influence Government policy is distributed between various interests, which together constitute a power structure: large, increasingly multinational corporations; financial institutions, geared to the private ownership of the means of production and committed to the free international movement of commodities and currencies and an organised working class seeking to improve wages and the working environment. All governments require at least the passive acquiescence of these pressure groups, but in an economy based upon private ownership, the power of industrial and financial capitalists is greater than that of any other class, since their needs determine the conditions on which economic growth can be achieved.

Therefore all governments managing a capitalist economy seek to create an environment in which profits flourish and managerial hierarchies remain unfettered. Keynes remarked in 1936 that 'economic prosperity is excessively dependent on a political and social atmosphere which is congenial to the average businessman.' The economic orthodoxy prevailing at any one time is partly created by economists, but mainly reflects the view of the most powerful institutions concerning their own and the government's functions. If trade unions are to shape economic events rather than merely react to them, they must be able to control (as opposed to becoming incorporated into) the political decision-

taking mechanism.

Interest groups acquire influence through a competitive struggle, but they compete on unequal terms because some possess more potent sanctions than others. In this world of imperfect political competition, the existence of private ownership ensures that the greatest leverage over governments is enjoyed by industrial and financial capital. The strongest indirect proof of their leverage is the persistence of attempts to secure and retain the business 'confidence' which is a necessary precondition for prosperity of an economy relying on the profit motive for its growth. Here lies the source of capitalist dominance in our society. This dominance has been strengthened by the international pressures upon a de-industrialising economy. There are no labour equivalents of the IMF to prevent measures detrimental to wage-earners or to advance those beneficial for the low paid.

So although effective unions can increase the money wages paid to their members and place some restraints upon capitalists' use of manpower, and these activities improve the living standards and extend the freedom of unionists, their impact is limited. However, recent events demonstrate that when unions accumulate sufficient strength to obstruct capitalists' decisions but possess no opportunity to initiate positive policies, society becomes unstable. Capitalists' authority is being challenged by the spread of education among workers, by outright rejection of certain employer sanctions such as arbitrary dismissal and by the difficulty of administering large organisations. This challenge has been intensified by the economic problems arising from Britain's relative decline. A major issue

facing the labour movement in the coming years will be its ability to extend the decision-making power of trade unions, at both national and workshop level, entailing a diminution in the authority of employers. It is possible that this could be done through the adoption of a more comprehensive prices and incomes policy, which socialists could accept in return for tangible benefits, such as extending workers' influence over a wider range of variables to achieve a more equal society. In this way unions may avoid the impasse of collective bargaining, which has a limited impact over income distribution.

Many trade unions can obstruct employers' policies without controlling the command structures that would enable them to undertake initiatives on behalf of their members. This stalemate can be broken only by reducing union bargaining power or by extending the degree of union influence over, and responsibility for, key industrial decisions, such as the level of prices, the volume and direction of investment, the control of job content and manpower requirements. The choice is not a difficult one for socialists to make. But the economic and social gains of the working class since 1940 will not be maintained, let alone extended, without an aggressive labour movement dedicated to advancing further union rights.

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Equality: a conflict of interest

Camera Press



The TUC in 1970 (left) and 1977 (right): a marked change in style but still no female faces.

John Sturrock (Report)

THE MEN AT BLACKPOOL will have three resolutions to consider, out of a total of 113, which refer specifically to women. Two are purely defensive, on abortion and protective legislation; and the third (which is likely to fail) suggests that the largest unions which have more than 100,000 female members, should have at least one woman to represent them on the General Council. Otherwise, scarcely a word will be spoken, from beginning to end of Congress, about the glaring inequalities that still exist between men and women at work. Yet if there was ever a time when the trade union movement needed to examine its conscience and alter its approach to equality, it is now.

New Statesman 31 August 1979

Though trade unions usually insist that laws should not usurp the function of collective bargaining, there was a distinct sound of hands being washed as the Equal Pay Acts and Sex Discrimination Acts came into force in 1975. The legislation pre-empted any need there might have been for trade union negotiators to put equality near the top of their bargaining list. And with a few notable exceptions (such as battles won by the white-collar unions TASS and APEX) little real work has been done to promote equality.

Authoritative evidence is provided by the London School of Economics' equal pay project, which monitored 26 organisations between 1974 and 1977, to see what effect the

two Acts were having.¹ Their findings show the remarkable lengths to which employers have gone to minimise their obligations under the Equal Pay Act – from altering the content of men's and women's jobs to avoid 'like work' comparisons and restructuring grading systems to leave women in the lowest grades, to altering factors by which jobs were evaluated to favour those done by men, and giving men additional duties to justify restoring differentials. Employers were found to be affected by fears of reactions from men and lack of pressure from unions:

In almost every case, management conceded the men's demands in order to avoid possible disruption and conflict ... In several cases, unions

actively colluded with management to minimise [their obligations] or allowed management to carry out such actions without protest.

Under the Sex Discrimination Act, 'changes have been few and on the whole superficial'. In more than half the organisations studied, managers admitted they were discriminating against women; but no cases had been taken up – either directly to tribunals or through trade union negotiation. Women sometimes knew they were victims of discrimination, but did not pursue the matter:

The reasons given were fears of unpleasantness and disruption at work, the difficulty of proving a case, the feeling that it was not worth the trouble involved and lack of support from the union. For example, union representatives in one organisation dismissed women's complaints of discrimination with the statement that it was 'management's right to select whoever they like'.

The LSE researchers concluded that active involvement by trade unions at the workplace could have a tremendous impact on pay and opportunities for women – by monitoring management practices, identifying inequalities and pressing for change – and that this could have far more effect than simply amending the laws. What was more:

The project findings make it clear that women's greater involvement in unions and pay determination is essential if women are to safeguard their interests at work.

IF THESE OBSERVATIONS have a familiar ring to them, it is because the LSE findings confirm what many women (and quite a few men) have known for some time. But as the evidence mounts, the need to understand the *reasons* for trade union inactivity and for the low level of women's participation becomes increasingly urgent. Plenty of explanations have been offered: women can't get to union meetings because of their domestic commitments; they are inexperienced and therefore hang back, letting men take the lead; they need to be encouraged by positive measures to be more active in union affairs . . . and so on. All of these things are true, but while attention is focused on practicalities, one crucial question is avoided. Why do men – who have the power to act, while women are still excluded from power – do so little to change the status quo? It cannot just be lethargy, since they are often found to be busy resisting change. Why, then?

Trade unions still operate according to the principles on which they were originally founded: to protect their members' interests. Inevitably, the strongest unions, or the strongest groups within unions, are most successful, in the normal run of industrial affairs, at protecting their own interests. The history of trade unionism is rich with brave acts of comradeship, but *pure* altruism, which involves self-denial without future gain, has never been a *primary* function and seldom enters into collective bargaining². As trade unionists, men have always had more muscle than women, and most of them suspect that they have nothing to gain and possibly much to lose by promoting equal pay and opportunity for women. They feel this more strongly than ever when the job market is contracting and when money is short. It could be said that in the long term men's lives will be improved by sex equality, but arguments of that kind are complex and rather abstract, and don't carry much weight with the average male worker. In the immediate sense, then, there is a genuine conflict of interest.

Most feminists, especially those who are also socialists, have tended not to confront this point and have certainly avoided discussing it in public – perhaps because it can so easily be confused with those general indictments of men as 'the enemy' that are associated with cruder interpretations of radical feminism. Instead, they have taken pains to stress the benefits to women of trade union involvement and the 'common struggle' of male and female workers, in which feminist demands have a rightful and logical place (which is true but not the whole story). Meanwhile, women workers may have been reluctant to look too closely at the reasons why men fail to support them. They have to live with them, after all. It cannot be easy to confront a conflict of interest with men at work while building a domestic life on an assumption of common interest. Men have no particular incentive to examine their own motives or seek to change themselves in this respect. But the conflict won't be resolved unless it is recognised.

IN EACH NEW WAGE ROUND, the idea prevails that male workers have a right to earn a 'family wage', which was once justifiable, but now bears little relation to the way most families arrange their lives. (Forty-six per cent of married women go out to work and there are more than six million single parents.) Seeing themselves as 'breadwinners', male trade unionists concentrate their demands on wages, rather than on other factors. They also tend to believe, for the same reason, that women's jobs are less important than theirs, requiring not only lower priority in the pay queue and less vigorous protection from redundancy, but also continuing financial support from men. All this implies that male workers operate in a sphere which is *separate* from the home, while women workers, though they may go each day to the same factory or office, occupy another sphere which incorporates the home. Two distinguished feminist writers point out in a recently-published article³ that men's strategy in collective bargaining 'historically has not expressed any responsibility as *active* fathers, because they have none'.

It is this separation of home life from working life which needs to be tackled. If men saw themselves as full-time parents (as women do, even when they go out to work), with a commitment to their families in terms of time and energy rather than primarily in terms of cash, they might view their interests from a new perspective. Is it inconceivable, for example, that a man would *want* to spend more time with his kids if he could work a 25- or 30-hour week and rely on a second, equal wage to support the family? And might he not then see more relevance in campaigning for better housing, improved health and child care facilities?

Women trade unionists already understand the importance of this shift. At the TUC Women Workers' Conference in March, a long and heated debate on parental leave ended with a decision to demand an extra six weeks' paid leave, to be added to the end of the current entitlement and 'to be taken by either the mother or the father of the baby, as they determine'. It was quite clear that the delegates thought this more necessary than demanding simply *paternity* leave, to run concurrently with the mother's leave at the time of birth: they wanted to establish the principle

that, in two-parent families, a father was not just an optional extra on the domestic scene, but had equal responsibilities as an active parent; and they wanted that to become a feature of union bargaining. Another resolution, on the impact of new technology, carried a similar message. It called on the TUC General Council

to campaign for a shorter working week for all waged workers to offset the effects of unemployment and to campaign among male trade unionists to use the extra time available to spread the burden of housework and child care.

The prospect of Len Murray and Tom Jackson leading a campaign to get men to spend more time cooking, cleaning and looking after their children seems more than a little ridiculous in the light of current TUC priorities. But would it strike such a bizarre note if the proportion of women among trade union members (one third) were reflected in union executives, in delegations to Congress and in the General Council? If women were able to exert real influence in proportion with their numbers, they might transform the very nature of trade unionism. The trouble is, however, that while men are busy defending their jobs and their prospects of more pay from encroachments by women, they are likely also to resist women's efforts to assert themselves in the unions. The same Women Workers' conference endorsed a draft Charter of Trade Union Aims, designed to increase the level of women's union involvement by specific, positive means. But no union has thought fit to include it in a resolution to Congress, so it remains, like almost all other motions passed by the 'advisory' women's conference, a dead letter. Since 1977, women have been calling for seven additional seats on the TUC General Council, but there is still no sign of anything being done to meet that demand. So there is a deadlock. Male unionists collude with employers to maintain unequal pay and opportunities because they suppose that progress made by women would threaten their interests as 'family wage earners'. Women wield insufficient power to overcome men's resistance and the male-dominated trade union movement is in no hurry to take the steps that would enable them to do so.

One hope of a breakthrough – which is not a particularly happy one – is that the industrial scene will change so drastically as new technology is introduced that male workers will be forced, by substantially reduced working hours, to reassess their relationship to their home life, to their children and to leisure. There are several resolutions to this year's Congress reaffirming the TUC's policy in favour of a 35-hour week and reduction in overtime. So far, the campaign for 35 hours has made little headway, as the demand has usually been jettisoned in return for wage gains. But as the threat to jobs intensifies it may take a higher priority, and may even be succeeded by demands for a further reduction in hours for longer holidays and for work sharing. If not, we shall find ourselves with an elite of full-time 'breadwinners' and a vast – and predominantly female – army of unemployed.

1. A report in the LSE project, by researcher Mandy Snell, was published in *Feminist Review* 1979 (1).

2. The thousands of workers who supported the Grunwick strike (for example) felt that the struggle of those Asian workers was their struggle too. Male trade unionists, at this stage, do not identify with the struggle of women in the same way.

3. 'Work to Rule' by Valerie Charlton and Beatrix Campbell, *Red Rag* 1978.

Lost in the corporate state

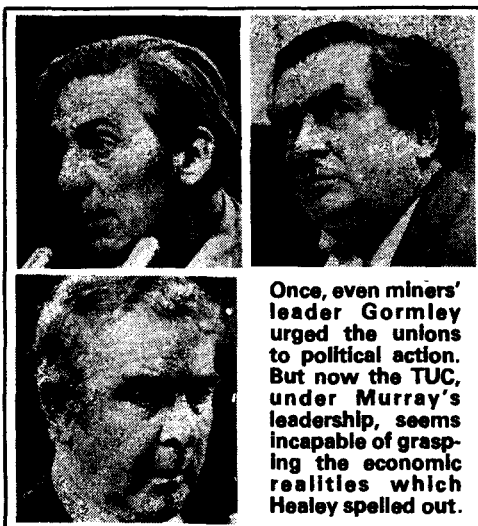
ON 28 JULY, 1976, the TUC-Labour Party Liaison Committee document ponderously named *The Next Three Years and the Problem of Priorities*, was agreed. It included a commitment to introduce a wealth tax – for long a part of TUC and Labour Party policy. The very next day the Labour government announced that, as part of its cuts in civil service manpower, it was scrapping the provision made for 3,000 jobs to administer a wealth tax in 1978/79. The previous February cuts to reduce the number of 'unproductive' public service jobs had been announced and had not been opposed by the TUC, whose 1976 Economic Review 'acknowledged' that the cuts represented 'the scaling down of hopes for the future.'

No single story could illustrate so starkly the failure of the TUC's 'partnership' with the government in which their participation in economic planning is meant to ensure higher incomes and a just society for all workers. As the crisis of the British economy has deepened the TUC's economic policy has become more and more detached from economic reality so that they still believe that the obstacles to growth – their central objective – are a government's reluctance to plan, institutional weaknesses or speculative exploitation of unproductive loopholes such as overseas investment or property dealing.

This lack of relationship to reality has been particularly noticeable in their attitude towards the public sector. The cash limits system, for example, was introduced in 1975 explicitly to curb wage bills: allowances for pay rises are built onto public spending plans around the December preceding the relevant financial year. In 1977 the TUC were discussing 1977/78 pay policy with the Government right up to 13th July: yet in the previous November the Government had already announced that cash limits would allow for pay increases of only 5-6 per cent in 1977/78, an issue which did not rate a mention in the General Council's report in 1977. Even in 1979, the Economic Review refers only to 'concern that depending on the timing of negotiations, decisions on cash limits may prejudice the outcome of pay negotiations'. This limited concern was promptly rendered obsolete by the Conservative Government's decision to fix cash limits 3 per cent below previously agreed pay levels, thus using unemployment as a punishment for pay rises. This stark monetarist principle was always involved in cash limits but the TUC found it hard to recognise because to do so would undermine their trust in the Labour Government.

Again, the 1979 Economic Review recognises and sets out in some detail the lengthy procedures by which the framework of Government expenditure plans are constructed, starting with Treasury guidelines issued to departments in December, 15 months before the financial year being planned, and culminating a year later in a White Paper publishing those plans and the setting of cash limits. Yet the Review still concludes by urging the importance of a tripartite national assessment of economic prospects to take place before Easter for the coming year – 3 months after final decisions have been reached on public spending plans for that year.

The public sector is the only aspect of the



Once, even miners' leader Gormley urged the unions to political action. But now the TUC, under Murray's leadership, seems incapable of grasping the economic realities which Healey spelled out.

economy which is under direct control of the Government, and therefore susceptible to planning. But trade union involvement in the planning procedures has remained virtually nil, despite the years of the Social Contract. The only way in which any TUC contribution could have affected the process would have been by some sympathetic ministers reading the TUC's Economic Review in March, noting any proposals relating to public spending in the next financial year but one and then fighting successfully through their departmental officials and Cabinet colleagues to alter the Treasury's planning framework. Such a Herculean exertion of political will by ministers would have been quite exceptional.

The TUC has refused to recognise that the cuts in public spending forced on the government by runs on the pound, investors' refusal to buy gilts and so on are a capitulation to hostile economic interests. The TUC's view of these events is that they are manifestations of irrational behaviour to be corrected by discussion. Thus the 1979 Economic Review comments:

What is quite clear is that the financial markets have become much more volatile of late and there is therefore a need to restore stability. The agreed economic assessment (to be made annually by Government, CBI and TUC) could be one important element in this. (para 274)

On the operation of the IMF it says:

The economic policy considerations attached by the IMF to its lending to member states can be criticised, but the fundamental principle of a strong international institution to regulate the international monetary system remains valid.

Since the IMF regulates national economies in the interests of international money (not vice versa), the 'conditions' are therefore the most crucial aspect of its work – as in the case of Britain – and since no one has ever suggested that the financial markets operate to try and maximise benefits to workers these paragraphs are triumphs of optimism over reality.

THE EFFORTS AT 'partnership planning' have, ironically, largely been directed at the private sector, and have similarly failed to have significant impact on real decisions. Tremendous amounts of trade union resources have been poured into the tripartite sector working parties (SWPs) under the auspices of NEDC, to study and assess the prospects for particular industrial sectors, and large numbers of reports have been produced, containing much valuable information. Actual

decisions in the private sector, however, are taken by companies, not by industries, and it was openly acknowledged at a TUC conference on the industrial strategy that it was all a waste of time unless an impact was made on companies. Planning agreements were the chosen instrument, but following the emasculation of the 1975 Industry Act, hardly any were signed. Undaunted, the TUC has launched a massive educational and propaganda exercise to inform shop stewards of the importance of the work done by the SWPs, in order to 'stimulate a response from management and from trade unionists in companies'. Workplace organisation, stifled and weakened by four years' incomes policy, is now expected to be an agent for national plans handed down from above.

Strikingly, the 1979 Economic Review does not once mention profitability, although improving it was central to the policies of the Labour government in the relaxation of the price code in 1977 and the massive reduction in corporate taxation in 1974, this latter being incorporated in a budget described by the TUC as 'a courageous endeavour to protect employment, stimulate investment and promote social justice.' The protection of profits was also behind incomes policy, spending cuts and the industrial strategy, as Denis Healey told the Overseas Bankers Club:

firms will only expand and invest if they can see scope for making profits,

and as the Treasury more bluntly put it:

the industrial strategy is based on the regeneration of a profitable industrial sector.

No one reading the TUC accounts of the industrial strategy would have an inkling of this.

The result of both this perspective and the policy of partnership has been that the TUC has shunned organised trade union action, even suppressed it. In 1975 the TUC recognised that the 'real leadership given by many negotiators . . . under pressure from the membership, and sometimes in response to offers from employers (means that) they have ultimately had to settle at levels which could not be justified by the guidelines' and then went on to urge unions to win full acceptance for Stage 1, advising 'where necessary, union executives will need to meet to review previous conference decisions in the light of the new situation.'

The TUC has not always avoided action so assiduously. In 1973 Joe Gormley argued, successfully:

We believe that now, when the time is ripe for the whole movement, we should advise Congress to pass a resolution which would show the Government that we, as a trade union movement, really mean what we say when we make protestations of opposition to their policies. Without this expression of action, we believe the trade union movement in general becomes more and more discredited, and its opinions are not taken seriously enough.

Today the argument is that all 'expressions of action' should be avoided, as the Tories will have to drop their rigid policies within a year and seek a tripartite consensus. If this happens, the TUC's absorption into the corporate state and incapacity for resistance will be complete.

DAVID HALL

David Hall is the head of research at the Society of Civil and Public Servants. He writes in a personal capacity.

United, but how militant?

Paul Routledge writes: The unavoidable issue facing the TUC, crystallised in an aside by a top general council man last week, is 'not whether we oppose this government, but how.' This is a ticklish business. Lord (then just plain Hugh) Sanlon put his finger on the dilemma last year when moving the motion supporting the re-election of the Callaghan government. He said:

Any government that seeks to resolve its problems by confrontation will receive from this movement the same determined opposition that existed during the 1971-74 period, adding, to placate public opinion not because of a campaign against an elected government by the TUC. That is not our style nor is it our record.

Despite this denial, that was the record of the trade union movement during the last Tory term of office. This government's policies have made it easier to get a united front through a series of composite motions at Blackpool: economic and social policy, unemployment and the shorter working week, free collective bargaining, public spending cuts and industrial relations legislation.

The motion on the latter commits the unions to a platform of non-cooperation and therefore excludes the more hard line approach of the building workers who wanted no talks with the government and the abandoning the TUC's own Code of Conduct. However the Code will be ditched if the govern-

ment spurns voluntarism in industrial relations.

When the agenda planners met at Congress House last week TUC general secretary Len Murray and Lord Allen, chairman of the Economic Committee, tried to win support for the general council's bland and bureaucratic 'Campaign for Economic and Social Advance'. One casualty to this appeal was ASTMS, idea of joint TUC-Labour Party talks on policy making 'learning from the past.' Basnett, Evans and Co however stared at their nails and accepted the Congress House staff's composite, prepared for such an eventuality. This will be the basis of union opposition to Thatcher, now known at the Treasury as Attila the Hen.

Some unions have jumped the gun: NUPE, with its campaign of niggling disruption of public services and advice on how to refuse to implement the cuts; the civil service unions SCPS and CPSA are close behind. The shipworkers are prepared, through their re-formed shop stewards committee, to fight the closures and by the time Congress debates economic policy next Wednesday, the engineers will just have finished their first two-day official strike.

There is little prospect of the left getting support for industrial action to resist the Tories. The general council fight off anything that smacks of a political strike and Callaghan, who is seeking trades union support in his fight against the left in the Labour party, is not keen either. Selected union leaders will be meeting the NEC on the Monday after Congress

to discuss the Callaghan-inspired committee of enquiry that is to discuss all aspects of party policy. A discreet veil has been drawn over last year's decision to campaign for the re-election of a Labour government. Union leaders probably do not want to be reminded of the autumn poll postponement, of which they did not approve.

Callaghan will be relying for support on Labour loyalists such as David Basnett of the GMWU who can be expected to scotch the idea of the ASLEF motion calling on the TUC to urge the Labour Party to make sure any future government keeps to party policies. Basnett plans to keep the Trade Union Committee for Labour Victory in being, in readiness for the next election and to help the NEC's committee of enquiry. TULV is not, he hastens to add, a vehicle to promote any faction.

Few significant changes are expected in the general council this year. Four go off to retirement, including the irreplaceable Maoist Reg Birch, whose place will be taken by the rising star of the AUEW Gavin Laird. Alec Smith should take the clothing seat, Bill Whatley, the new general secretary of USDAW, should take the place vacated by his predecessor Lord Allen. This means that for the first time in years there will be no peer on the general council and only one knight: John Boyd.

Allen's place on Neddy is expected to go to either Frank Chapple of the electricians, Clive Jenkins of ASTMS or Tom Jackson, the postmen's leader and this year's chairman of the TUC. Basnett is expected to become the new chairman of the TUC economic committee.

POLITICAL ECONOMY Howard Sharon

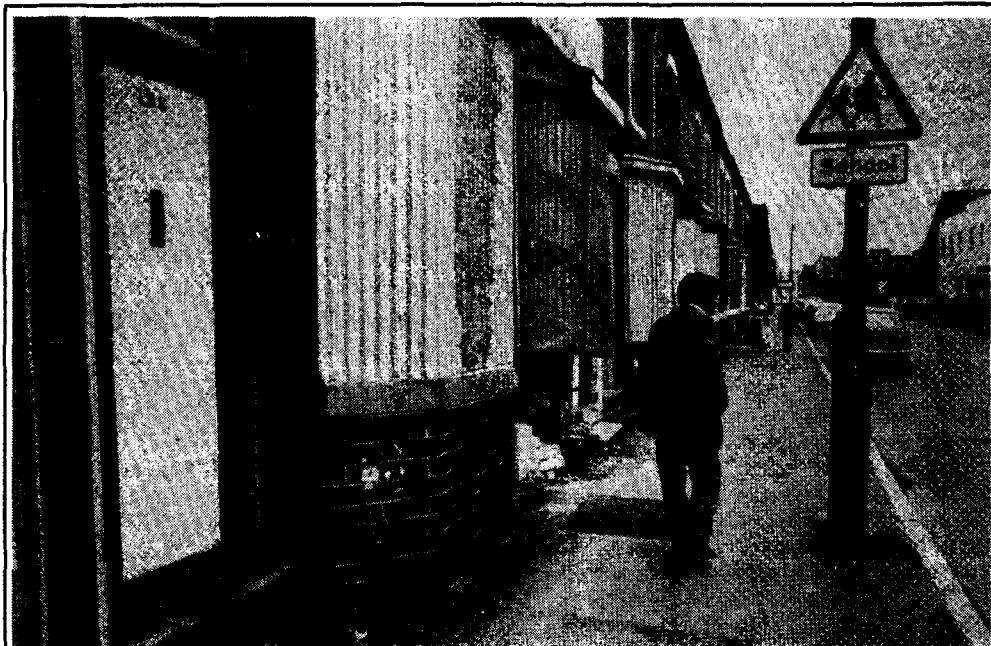
How the Urban Renewal Programme failed

Birmingham's inner city blues

AT THE END of the sixties, Birmingham was typical of many of Britain's inner cities. Since the end of the war the population had fallen from almost half a million to just over 300,000. The cause was a mixture of a heavy reliance on declining industries, the flight of successful industries to new sites and widespread redevelopment of slum properties and bomb sites. The result was a population disproportionately old, poor and unemployed, who could not afford to keep their houses in a decent state of repair. The whole atmosphere and appearance of the area was such that the young, able and ambitious left as soon as they could, accelerating the process of decline.

The area was, in other words, just the sort of place which the then Labour government wanted to help with its programme for urban renewal, enshrined first in the Housing Act of 1969 and, later, in a second attempt, that of 1974. The policy has, however, been an abject failure. Instead of thousands of houses being improved, Birmingham has been a playground for property speculators. The inadequacy of government policy, the inaction of the local council, the behaviour of the financial institutions and the legacy of a previous generation's speculative splurge have all combined to wreck the policy.

MOST OF THE CENTRE of Birmingham was built at the end of the last century - row upon row of terraced houses to accommodate the fast growing industrial working class. Large sections of the development were built upon the leasehold system. The landed aristocracy leased their land to builders, who sold the houses they built, in bulk, on 99 year leases. These houses were either rented or sold to owner occupiers with underleases of 99 years. Many of these leases are now falling due and even at the time of the 1969 Housing Act many who considered themselves as



Birmingham decays despite Labour's inner city policy.

Brian Homer

owner occupiers knew that shortly they could find themselves as tenants to whoever owned the freehold.

This acted as a powerful disincentive to do any sort of improvement work on the properties in which they lived. But in any case the 1969 Act was little use for the people who lived in an inner city area like Birmingham. The Act set up General Improvement Areas, in which councils received money to make the area look better and householders and landlords could receive 60 per cent grants to improve their houses. The 1974 Act created Housing Action Areas and increased the grant to 75 per cent.

The grant scheme had two major defects:

the ceiling for the level of grants was always too low and the obligation to find a contribution amounting to well over £1,000 was too onerous for the majority of people living in the area.

For landlords the rent increase they would be allowed was not sufficient incentive to spend the money on improvement, even if they had wanted to.

In 1974 the ceiling under the government's urban renewal scheme was £3,000 per house but the inflation of 1974-75 made this hopelessly inadequate. Builders were quoting anything between £5,000 and £7,000. When the ceiling was raised to £5,000 in 1977, this too was inadequate. Repeated visits to the

Department of Environment by Birmingham's chief executive Mr Jim Amos were always met with the argument that in times of economic crisis sacrifices had to be equally shared.

With most people unable or unwilling to make improvements to their houses, there was little incentive for other residents to do so. Owner occupiers would only spend money on their house if it looked as though the whole area might improve, so their investment would be reflected in the value of their house. The council was slow to spend money on the area until more householders had made their own improvements, but they wanted the council to move first. . . .

Owner occupiers who wanted to spend money on their homes found it hard to come by. Throughout the sixties, the local building societies, so willing to take deposits from the inhabitants of the inner city, were not willing to lend the money back to them. They drew a red line round the inner city area and prohibited all loans within the area. They argued that the residents lacked credit worthiness and the property was a bad risk because house values depend on the appearance of the area as a whole – thus ensuring that their prophecy was fulfilled.

TWO LOCAL BUILDING societies – the Birmingham Incorporated and the Birmingham Citizens – were increasingly lending money to people to buy houses in the suburbs: between 1970 and 1975 despite a virtual doubling of its assets, the Birmingham Citizens actually managed to reduce the number of mortgages it provided by ten per cent.

Without building society funds available, those owner occupiers who wanted to do something to their houses were pushed into the arms of fringe finance companies. A survey of the area showed that over two-thirds of the owner occupiers had borrowed from clearing banks at interest rates of between 17–19 per cent, twice that charged on local authority mortgages. Roughly 14 per cent of the market had been covered by fringe banks and finance companies who were charging rates of between 17 and 26 per cent.

Two companies in particular were heavily involved in Birmingham: Julian Hodge and Cedar Holdings. Hodge did not hesitate to try and re-possess the homes of people who found it difficult to keep up their repayments on loans costing 25 per cent. In their heyday Cedar Holdings were giving 100 per cent mortgages at similar rates, using unscrupulous estate agents (who offered houses with 'mortgages arranged' at inflated prices) aided by solicitors acting for both vendors and purchasers, often to the serious disadvantage of the purchaser. A complaint to the Law Society on this resulted in several investigations and in Anthony Derbyshire, secretary of the Birmingham Law Society, being struck off.

Both Hodge and Cedar, although on the fringes of banking, were on the inside of the political and financial system. Hodge's chairman, Julian Hodge, was knighted for his services to the country, and was a friend of Labour leader Callaghan, who was on the board of the Hodge-promoted Commercial Bank of Wales. Cedar Holdings was backed by, among others, the National Coal Board pension fund and was one of the beneficiaries of the Labour Government's £1.5 billion 'Lifeboat' to rescue the secondary banking industry. This lifeboat was, of course, laun-

ched at the time that the government was cutting back finance for local authority mortgages and municipalisation programmes: both important to the inner city areas. The irony of such a situation is not always apparent to those who do not live in places such as Birmingham, from where it is also perhaps easier to see what is wrong with a society in which miners' money finances and Labour politicians befriend secondary bankers who profit from Labour's own inner city problems.

WHILE GOVERNMENT SPENDING cuts, the inadequate level of improvement grants and the financial institutions were undermining the Urban Renewal Programme, property companies, private contractors and Tories were sabotaging the programme in Birmingham. The leasehold system, in addition to inhibiting improvement, provided speculators with a remarkable opportunity for profit. During the sixties two property companies in particular bought out the freeholds in Birmingham (without the occupiers' knowledge) – London City and Westcliffe (now part of the Lonrho conglomerate) and C and P Estates, owned by London and County Real Estate. Their aim was to redevelop the area, so they had no incentive to sell the freeholds to the residents and were in a strong position to resist such moves. Since the property crash of 1974 these companies have been selling up: by buying freeholds in bulk, the purchasers aim to sell on at a profit to individual householders. For instance, last year 500 residents in the Norton area were offered their freeholds at roughly twice the price paid by a faceless Jersey company only months before.

Under the 1967 Leasehold Reform Act a landlord is obliged to sell his freehold if the leaseholder requests it but the leaseholder must pay all the costs (including those of the other sides) and buy out all the sub-leases between him and the freeholder. This makes the process prohibitively expensive and puts people at the mercy of solicitors who may be ideologically opposed to the Act.

The only solicitor in the Saltley area of Birmingham was Reginald Eyre, Tory MP, shadow spokesman on the inner cities, a solicitor for London and County Real Estate and a champion of full market compensation for freeholders. This was the person to whom residents had to turn for help in buying out their freeholds: recently he has agreed to reduce the legal charges for this service, but others have not.

Solicitors who have been able to combine the job with that of property dealers have been richly rewarded. For instance, Denis Pill owns a group of property companies which bought up a large number of the leases in the Saltley area and demanded £384 from residents for them, including £125 for the freehold. One of the directors of some Fell companies is Neville Bosworth (Tory leader of Birmingham council), of solicitors Bosworth, Bailey and Cox, who acted in the transactions. The residents' organisation have been fighting for years to get the Leasehold Reform Act amended, by introducing a formula for fixing the price of a leasehold. Trying to enlist the help of Saltley MP Denis Powell – a friend of Fell's – they were told that such change would be 'inequitable'.

Without such a change and with the continuing unprofitability of private rented property, landlords did little to maintain their property and, where possible, put pressure on

tenants to move out, as the vacant possession value of a house could be twice or three times that when tenanted. Cash incentives, offers of alternative accommodation with arranged mortgages (often at high interest rates) and a variety of legal moves have been used in an attempt to secure vacant possession.

Take, for example, the case of Mrs M, a pensioner of Warstone Terrace, Handsworth, who found herself with writs for eviction and non-payment of rent from solicitor Bosworth acting on behalf of one of Fell's companies, which has bought her house. She spent her life savings getting tenants out of the upstairs rooms after her landlords objected. After two court actions, the social services department, worried about her health, rehoused her and her home was sold in May 1977 for £3,300.

Investigations reveal that the Fell companies were heavily financed by the Midland Bank and the Bradford and Bingley Building Society – which had taken over the Birmingham Permanent Building Society, of which Bosworth was a director.

THOSE RESIDENTS LUCKY enough to be able to raise the money to improve their houses were prey to small, cowboy contractors as the large firms would not take on work on isolated houses and the council did not organise block tendering which might have made this work more attractive to big companies. It would have been illegal to use the council's own direct works department, as this can only be used on council housing. Until the Tories took over Birmingham council in 1976 Labour operated an agency system under which residents paid the council £25 and the council employed the builder and supervised work on residents' behalf. This scheme was scrapped by the Tories so that the contractual arrangement was between the resident and the builder. This has made it extremely difficult for owner occupiers to secure compensation for the poor work, reports of which have come in from all over the city. The Tories weakened the programme further by disbanding the urban renewal department in the council, whose job it was to co-ordinate all the work being done in the inner city.

But by the beginning of last year it was clear to the Tories that their policy would have to be modified. The constant pressure and agitation from residents over the whole range of problems which faced the inner areas of Birmingham made it obvious that widespread municipalisation was needed. The Tories obviously wanted to avoid this. So, in a sharp reversal of policy, they agreed to the bulk purchase of some freeholds, so that they could be sold on to residents. Then they introduced the 'Facelift' scheme, under which people can get 100 per cent grants for external improvement. Improvements are being done on a street by street basis, so that large, skilled building companies can be used. The scheme is confined to a small area of the inner city but it does incorporate many propositions which local residents have been requesting for years. The Tories have, of course, introduced the scheme to avoid more sweeping reforms, but it is ironic that the last Labour government was opposed to the scheme – largely it seems, from a fear that it would catch on elsewhere. In other words, the real advance in getting an inner cities policy was the result of the efforts of the people who lived there and, to the end, a major obstacle, was the government for which many of them had voted.

London Diary

□ Why does the slaying of Lord Mountbatten fill one with the most awful foreboding? Partly, of course, because nobody should go that way, and because their grandchildren should certainly not be taken with them. Then, again, because he was one of the few members of our 'Royal Family' who ever did or risked anything to earn his esteem in the public eye. But also, I think, because one knows that we are in for one of those appalling festivals of fake national unity. To get an idea of what I mean, look at the *Daily Express* front page on the relevant day. There, Mountbatten is described as 'one of the greatest men of the century', by a paper which vilified and hounded him consistently when he was alive, for no better reason than that he supported the cause of Indian independence. (Note to the BBC, he didn't exactly 'give' independence to that country.)

There is something really lowering, on occasions such as royal weddings, Churchill's funeral, the death of Airey Neave and so on, in the attempt made to conscript everybody into the same frame of mind. We are now being assured that the killing of Mountbatten will make no difference to 'our' resolve to stay in Northern Ireland on the same fruitless courses 'we' have followed for the last ten years. And eighteen 'ordinary' soldiers died on the same day to try and make that policy stick:

When beggars die there are no comets seen:
The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes.

□ There is another reason for 'Dickie' Mountbatten having been a rather more controversial figure than any obituary has so far recalled. It seems ages since the last spirited attempt to mount a corporate state *putsch* in this country. But when the upper crust decided that we might be better off without democracy for a trial period, Mountbatten felt modest enough to count himself in. Cecil King's *Diary* records, and Hugh Cudlipp's memoirs confirm, that there took place a meeting, in 1968, where a very odd cast was assembled. King was there of course, and Sir William Armstrong and Sir Burke Trend (then the two senior civil servants) and Sir Solly Zuckerman, then the scientific adviser to the government, and some others, and Mountbatten. When things started to turn nasty, with King talking of 'bloodshed on the streets' and 'the armed forces being involved', Sir Solly Zuckerman walked out saying: 'This is rank treachery, Dickie. I'm not staying and nor should you.' Dickie stayed.

□ It won't be long before Sir James Goldsmith's pioneering news magazine *Now!* is with us. Its promotion campaign makes the heart sink and the toes curl. It announces that it is practically a new medium, and will do for journalism what colour did for the television. Well, colour is not a medium, and didn't do anything at all to change the nature of television, so the claim can probably be taken at face value. So no doubt can Goldsmith's claim to be wanting a paper of Thatcherite values and perspectives. But why does the BBC have to oblige the man so much? David Dimbleby is a terribly bad interviewer – arguably, indeed, the worst we have – at the best of

times. His combination of sycophancy, bonhomie, false starts and pseudo-toughness is exactly ill-judged. Presumably that is why the rich and the powerful are always agreeable to being interviewed by him. He excelled himself, though, with Goldsmith. After a lot of obliging and repetitive questions about the complexity and diversification of the Cavenham empire, Dimbleby allowed himself to be unhorsed by the revelation that his own family and company holdings were even more ramified than those of Sir James. Cut to Goldsmith looking as if he had laid an egg, and Dimbleby looking as if a cigar had blown up in his face. Then fade to the next fearless scene. Goldsmith no doubt thinks himself no end of a clever fellow, and Dimbleby probably imagines himself very sporting. But that sort of trick is too easy to pull when the BBC lets members of the establishment interview each other.

□ The Notting Hill carnival last weekend was even more boring than in previous years. It has now become one of those great British Bank Holiday washouts, with families moving aimlessly through drifts of litter, and every kind of tout seizing his chance. The music is nice enough, and it brightens up the area for a few days, but it has definitively joined the Lord Mayor's show and the Easter Parade as a national non-event. There has, by the by, never been as much violence at one of these events as could be expected from the most average football match. So would it be too much to ask the (much-maligned, doing a tough job under arduous conditions) Metropolitan Police a question. Why do we respectable residents of the area need police helicopters hovering low over the streets for days on end? It gives one the impression of living in an occupied country, and I am assured by people in the know that Mrs Thatcher's government is anxious to give the very reverse impression to all citizens from the New Commonwealth.

□ Just as one is driven to despair by the sight of a fat-cat getting away with it on the box (*vide* Goldsmith) so one is always being depressed by the terrible performance of the forces of light when they get their morsel of airtime. Denis MacShane has written an excellent handbook for trade unionists (*Using the Media*. Pluto Press £2.50) which might help to counter the massed weight of PR men and 'company spokesmen' on the other side. He didn't, for instance, make this up – it's a senior TUC man before the Wilson committee on the City:

I do not think we can say it is a black-and-white situation but in the 1980s what we are emphasising is that we are in a whole new ball game when we hope we will have a growth scenario when we believe that profitability in a secular as well as a cyclical sense will be important.

I have just read the preposterously pompous and philistine annual report of the General Council of the TUC. It has the minutes of a meeting where the 'International Committee' considered Patrick Wintour's fine NS piece of last March. This revealed the TUC's fellow-travelling with those who sweat labour across the frontiers. The TUC's legal advisers reported that the article 'contained suggestions and innuendoes which, if proved to be true, would clearly be defamatory'. (Italics mine.) That's the first we've heard of it. What can they be admitting?

□ There are really two kinds of people: those whose natural instinct is to cheer when they hear that the Bastille has fallen, and those who are already gloomily imagining the dimensions of the prison that will rise in its place. In Britain there is a strong predisposition to sign up with the second camp, even when faced with an unambiguously 'good thing' like the Nicaraguan revolution. The recent turn of events in Iran has seemed to confirm every cynical nostrum about revolutions devouring their children, the wheel coming full circle and so forth. Many people, especially those who cared about Iran before last Christmas and who were and are friends of the Iranian Left, are profoundly depressed. So is a hopeful note bound to be in bad taste? The Kurds, whose ancient territory spans what is now the USSR, Turkey, Iraq and Iran, seem to me to be seizing an opportunity they could never have dreamt of under the Shah. Their movement for autonomy is not the only thing made possible by the Shah's removal, but it may turn out to be the most important. Khomeini, of course, continues the Shah's policy but with less conviction. We should keep up great hopes. Saladin was a Kurd, and this brave and ambitious people will be around long after Khomeini has gone where he seems so anxious to send others.

□ A sure sign of advancing age is the reaction one has to the 'tipping' of a politician for high office. Like everybody I know, I just burst out laughing when I read that Roy Hattersley is thought of 'in some circles' as a party leader or (ipso facto) a Prime Minister. I'm old enough to remember the clownish way in which he would volunteer to defend Wilson's most repugnant policies – often because more seasoned toadies wouldn't take on the job. Then a few days ago in the *Guardian* I find him replying to some woman who asks how a man of his stature could make the agonising choice 'between power and poetry'. Hattersley's riposte is absolutely unblemished by irony. He accepts that he could have been either a politician or a poet, and I'm sure he would be at least as good a poet as he is a politician. But then he says 'I suppose that I have mellowed since 1948, perhaps even matured a little'. Oh come, come Roy. I wouldn't say that.

Christopher Hitchens

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

□ Mr. Henry James, her press secretary, said that she had not had any time off at all since her arrival in Lusaka. He said: 'It is impossible to get Mrs. Thatcher to relax. If she has an afternoon off, she will say: "But what am I to do with it? I must govern".' – *Daily Telegraph* (J. Lukes)

□ This issue of the Oxbridge contribution is important, not in itself, but in the overall effect on England's welfare. In the 1950s over a third of England's runs were scored by Blues and that was England's most successful decade this century. In the 1960s over a quarter of England's runs came from former Oxbridge batsmen. But in the early 1970s that proportion fell to nill, and it is no coincidence that England is now short of captains. – *Observer* (Malcolm Clarke)

□ Public flogging of unruly youngsters was among the topics discussed by Wanstead-Woodford Conservative women over strawberries and cream last week. – *Redbridge Guardian* (Kathy Johnson).

Nicholas Walter's atheism: a vindication of disbelief?

From Matilda Roalfe

John Mortimer is a good writer but a bad thinker, as may be seen from the references to Nicolas Walter in his London Diary (NS 17 August).

Mortimer is wrong about Walter's article replying to Paul Johnson. He says that it was 'entirely religious' and compares it with a creed or a liturgy; but it isn't religious to attack religion, and a stylistic resemblance doesn't mean a significant relationship. He says that no one would deny Father Christmas or Sinbad the Sailor with the passion and eloquence with which Walter denied God; but no one would affirm them with the passion and eloquence with which Johnson affirmed God. He says that Christianity and atheism both proceed entirely by an act of faith and a suspension of disbelief, and that to deny God's existence is at least a sign of respect; but there is no faith in unfaith or belief in unbelief, and no respect in repudiation. He says that his own atheism is 'quite irrational'; but it is quite rational to deny something for which there is no evidence.

The paradoxical and patronising equation of irreligion with religion is a bad old trick of religious writers, and it is sad to see it used by an irreligious writer, even in jest. Atheism is no more than the rational rejection of theism, and this negative conclusion of freethought is much less important than its positive conclusion of humanism, for both Mortimer and Walter, as for all other freethinkers.

Mortimer is also wrong about Walter's part in the *Gay News* case. What was important was not his discovery of the *Freethinker* report of the Gott case half a century ago, which was interesting but not unique and which had no effect in practice, but his republication of James Kirkup's poem, which did more than anything else to challenge the prosecution and to continue the freethought tradition of defending the freedom of the press in deed as well as in word.

Riddle's Close, Lawnmarket, Edinburgh

From Rev. Denis Shaw

I was glad that John Mortimer got the same impression of Nicolas Walter as I did. Nowhere in Walter's article did he attempt to deal with the problem (for atheists) of the persistent religious impulse in man, but he gave a pretty fair exhibition of it.

It was this impulse which caused Joad to write, after his return to Christianity:

... the demand for a religious faith by human beings must be based on the same real nature of things as that which produced the human beings who make the demand. It is hard to credit in practice and it leads to contradiction in theory to suppose that nature has constituted man in such a way that he can only survive and prosper if he holds a belief in something which is not.

Those who 'have no religion' invariably prove to have an 'alternative religion' of their own devising. Nicolas Walter is a prize example.

Clewer Rectory, 14 Parsonage Lane, Windsor

From Allan Pond

Nicholas Walter (NS 10 August) is wrong to regard agnosticism as simply a figleaf for faint hearted atheists to hide behind. If it is impossible to either prove or disprove the existence of God, as he seems to accept, surely the only option is to keep an open mind on the subject and to be equally doubtful of the arguments of both believers and non-believers since neither are supported by evidence.

In this sense agnosticism is not, as Nicolas Walter seems to imply, a weaker, less courageous form of atheism; it is a different kind of belief altogether. As for his simple faith in the benefits of reason and science, surely that aspect of rationalism is now the most discredited of all. What has science given us? The hydrogen bomb, chemical warfare, cars that pollute the atmosphere and drugs that disorder the mind. A record no better than the sectarianism, dogmatism and persecution which Walter regards as

the legacy of Christendom.
36 Severn Street, Leicester

From Val Osborne

As a humanist I am disturbed by Nicolas Walter's answer to Paul Johnson's 'Vindication of Belief'. Why does he choose to attack a version of Christianity that most Christians no longer accept, and indeed would attack as vehemently as he does? Does he seriously believe that an objective belief in a heaven and hell in the next life is central to what most Christians believe now? Has he done his homework?

Has Mr Walter considered that myth contains



truth, in a real sense is truth? Where does he account for the type of truth expressed in metaphor and poetry? It is no less valid than what he would call scientific truth. Man does not live by bread alone.

I hope that the humanist cause can be better represented by someone who has some appreciation of the transcendental in our attempts to make some sense of what we perceive. One may decide to reject and ignore it in one's personal life, but it is impossible to dismiss it as irrelevant or silly.

Lastly, a slight point, perhaps. It would serve Mr Walter's case better to show some respect for Paul Johnson's intelligence. Christians are not necessarily stupid.

30 Eglinton Hill, London SE18

From H. C. Alexander

I ask myself, 'Does Nicolas Walter secretly wish to be a Parish Priest, or even editor of the *Church Times*?' And in all honesty I must answer 'No.' He speaks for the individual and does not even cry 'Dissidents of the world unite!' for their millions don't want to; like the cat they like walking alone. But he does not follow Sir Arthur Keith's advice, 'We have no more right to deprive men and women of their religion than of their favourite drinks unless we can provide reasonable and acceptable substitutes.' He provides no better 'ole than ours.

To general syncretism we can answer 'Yes'; our community is suffused with the distilled wisdom of Babylon, Egypt, Athens and Rome; our music, architecture, sculpture, glass, woodwork, bells, surpass all others. Our creeds have been forced on us by outsiders; 'Jesus is Lord' is our grass roots faith.

Whatever divinity means, it is not inconsistent with the life and death of a Carpenter; nor with the call to pause, one day in seven, from being driven by that devil Mammon.

No scientific formula is adequate to cover those numinous moments which mark our membership of the human family, the community vital to our existence, namely birth, maturity, sin, sickness and death.

As for our being at our worst when we were strongest, we were and are at our best when those four despised documents are clearly read and

expounded in a language understandable by the people.

Keinton Mandeville, Somerset

From Penny Allen

Nicholas Walter is wrong about 'substitute religions'. They are not 'equally false in what they say about the world.' Christianity and the other patriarchal religions, in positing the creative spirit as masculine are, we now know from the study of the biological sciences if not from the evidence of our own senses, more false than the religions which assumed the origins of life to be feminine.

The enforced silence of women has been and still is essential to Christianity. The British State and Church share the same Head who, as Head of the patrilineal family appointed we are to believe by the first Father to rule us, symbolises the patriarchal nature of our institutions and law-making bodies, both moral and statutory.

The enforced silence of women (apart from the token few) is also essential to the State. It comes as no surprise, then, that the *NEW STATESMAN* did not see fit to break the 2,000 year old rule that forbids women to participate in theological debate and chose a man to reply to Paul Johnson. To have allowed a woman two whole pages to develop an argument would, of course, have drastically upset the balance of the magazine - 37 male writers to 2 female or three-quarters of a page of female writing out of a total of 36 that week. But perhaps you could have made up for it by letting the women keep silence in the *NEW STATESMAN* as well as in the churches for the following eight months or so.

36 Rectory Grove, London SW4

Churchill and the Jews

From Peter Gillman

In his anxiety to demonstrate anti-Jewishness on the part of British officials during World War II, David Pryce-Jones, reviewing Bernard Wasserstein's *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945* (NS 24 August), has fallen into a notorious trap concerning the position of Winston Churchill. Both Pryce-Jones and Wasserstein like Churchill because he was pro-Zionist, but make the mistake of supposing that he held consistent views on such matters. They cite the internment of refugees as evidence of official prejudice but do not squarely face the problem that Churchill was one of the prime movers of this policy.

The first large-scale arrests were agreed in Churchill's first cabinet as Prime Minister on 11 May 1940; thereafter Churchill was internment's most ardent Cabinet advocate, in the face of Home Office opposition, as the Cabinet minutes reveal. 15 May: '... he thought it important that there should be a very large round-up of enemy aliens and suspect persons in this country...' 18 May: 'The Prime Minister summed up... it would be desirable to stiffen up the measures already taken.' 24 May: 'The Prime Minister said that his view on this matter had greatly hardened...'.

Pryce-Jones cites the deportation of internees as a further example of anti-Jewishness, even suggesting that 'the bureaucrats' were trying to deter other Jews from entering Britain. This is absurd. The deportations did not start until June 1940, nine months after the last refugees had arrived. And Churchill was again the instigator of the policy. He was the first to suggest deportation in Cabinet, on 24 May: 'He was strongly in favour of removing all internees out of the United Kingdom'. Having handed the matter over to Chamberlain he harried him to see that it was carried out; Wasserstein quotes one of Churchill's minutes to this effect. Pryce-Jones implies that only Jewish refugees were on the *Arandora Star*, torpedoed on its way to Canada in July 1940. In fact they comprised about one-quarter of those on board, and the heaviest casualties were among Italians.

Pryce-Jones also says that Churchill was 'lied to' by officials anxious to protect their policies. In the

context of internment he is probably thinking of Churchill's later claim that there were '20,000 organised German Nazis in England at this time': Wasserstein supposes that the security services told Churchill so. This is scarcely credible. MI5's view, reported to Cabinet several times in May, was that any German network had been destroyed by the internment of some 350 Germans at the start of the war. Subsequent examination of German and British records has shown this view to be substantially correct. In making such a claim Churchill showed his own vulnerability to the fifth column scare which was the largest factor leading to internment.

An understandable obsession with the horrors of recent Jewish persecution does not absolve writers and historians from attending honestly to the material facts.

21 Warminster Road, London SE25

Labour won't win with a negative campaign

From Dave Gardner and John Gardner

Indeed the Trade Unionists for a Labour Victory made a most valuable contribution to Labour's election effort, particularly in heavily industrialised constituencies such as our own. David Basnett must be praised for the time he has devoted to 'doing the rounds with the begging bowl' and co-ordinating union assistance; however, his implied assumption (Letters, 17 August) that the main reason for Labour's defeat was its organisational impotence simply doesn't hold water.

In Luton East for example, which the Conservatives took by 800 votes with a 5 per cent swing, the 'electoral machine' worked as well as could be expected with no shortage of volunteers, literature, organisers, back-up staff or assistance from Transport House. Given the decline in social and real wages combined with the distortions of the media we achieved the best result possible under the circumstances. What was distinctly noticeable about the election was Labour's totally alien 'negative' campaign more akin to a Tory 'Red Scare' strategy in reverse. This dampened the enthusiasm of workers who had helped fight for such moderate demands as a 35-hour week, a minimum wage, abolition of the House of Lords, etc. - all supported by the GMWU.

This is precisely why there has been a groundswell of opinion among grass-roots activists for democratisation of the Parliamentary leadership. As David Basnett is doubtless aware, organisation is indivisible from politics; only with a radical socialist goal to fight for will workers readily go out signing up members and building the Party. Members of the NEC, to their credit, never in fact objected to the need for an inquiry into party organisation to help strengthen our agency service, central research facilities, etc. But this must not be a diversion from the major priority of creating a mass, socialist and democratic Party of the working-class.

92 Swifts Green Road, Luton

Proudhon: ideas, not myths

From Chris Jones

To write about Pierre-Joseph Proudhon without once using the words 'anarchism' or 'federalism' is a similar feat to writing about Karl Marx without using the word 'Communism'. Paul Foot is to be congratulated on achieving this in his review of Edward Hyams's new biography of Proudhon (NS 24 August).

In the best tradition of sectarian abuse, Paul Foot finds Proudhon 'horrible', 'disgusting', 'vile'. Far from trying to get to the bottom of Proudhon's political thought, he presents the Frenchman's ideas and life, political and personal, as an incoherent jumble. This, presumably, he sees as the immutable 'Proudhonism', which, like the Trotskyism he himself professes (or used to profess?), must be swallowed whole, or not at all.

Proudhon is not that sort of socialist hero. He did not die in exile, or before his time; nor, for that matter, did he take part in a successful revolution.

His life therefore lacks the sharp contours that create enduring myths. He is not a Marx, nor a Lenin, nor a Trotsky. But his ideas are none the worse for that.

Proudhon's understanding of authoritarianism, for example, was profound: he realised that what many socialists called 'liberation' was an illusion. He criticised socialists who, then as now, assumed that struggles for 'national liberation' automatically liberated individuals and classes. Almost alone among his generation, he opposed the reunification of Italy into the centralised state favoured by Mazzini and Garibaldi. He predicted that it would lead to a new Caesarism - as indeed it did, with Germany following the same pattern - and favoured instead a federal union of the small states of Italy.

Anarchists have always believed that small is beautiful, that the isolation between ruler and ruled in the large electoral units of bourgeois national democracy creates its own authoritarianism. Proudhon was a regionalist rather than a nationalist, and favoured the withering away of bourgeois politics itself, to be replaced by associations of workers, who unite into larger, federal, units to solve problems that they could not tackle at local level.

To get some idea of the mind of Proudhon, this 'horrible', 'disgusting', 'vile' person, it is worth quoting a letter he wrote to Marx in 1846, after Marx had suggested they collaborate: 'Let us not, because we are at the head of a movement, make ourselves the leaders of a new intolerance; let us not pose as the apostles of a new religion, even if it be the religion of logic, the religion of reason. Let us gather together and encourage all protests, let us brand all exclusiveness, all mysticism; let us never regard a question as exhausted, and when we have used our last argument, let us begin again, if necessary, with elegance and irony. On that condition I would gladly enter your association. Otherwise - no!'

The final answer was indeed no. Paul Foot's review is a sign that some Marxists are still taking it rather hard, even after 133 years.

47 Blomfield Road, London W9

Uses of child labour

From Claire Wallace

I was interested to read the article by Steve Kelly (NS 3 August) about the widespread use of child labour in cafes, shops and holiday resorts, because I do not think that today it has the dreadful Dickensian connotations of brutal exploitation that your article implies. Child labour can, in fact, be used quite constructively.

It is difficult for those under 16 to find any kind of legal work due to the restriction of laws controlling under-age employment, although this does not of course prevent them from looking for and obtaining employment. I myself worked at several places before I was 16 (which was only a few years ago), sometimes by concealing my age, and I undertook as many as four part-time jobs simultaneously. I was encouraged in this by my parents because firstly they could not afford to supply the considerable pocket money for clothes and hobbies which is demanded by this age group, secondly because it represented a productive use of my spare time which was preferable to sitting around at home, bored and in everyone's way, and thirdly because they felt it was an excellent educational experience for me.

From talking to young people at the holiday resort where I live at the moment, I form the impression that part-time and seasonal jobs are welcomed by young people as a source of income and independence. Many parents, especially those in large and low income families, must find this a considerable relief. Furthermore, this experience of work and initiative in finding jobs is of direct use when it comes to leaving school and looking for permanent employment.

Many kids undertake this work because they enjoy it, and it can give access to facilities that many of them could never afford to enjoy otherwise. Take

for example the army of dedicated young volunteers who work in riding schools, stables and kennels for few rewards apart from the pleasure of working with animals.

Finally, the nature of work which children do is in many ways impossible to enumerate or control, especially if you stick too rigidly to the distinction that under 16 equals dependent child and over 16 equals adult worker in the wage economy. The offspring of farming families have always helped around the farm. Where families undertake fruit-picking or factory outwork, children can also contribute to family resources by helping. This can then be extended even further to family enterprises such as market stalls, cafes, restaurants, shops and the businesses of friends and relatives. Legislation to limit the use of child labour can be easily evaded, and may simply provoke more imaginative schemes by parents, employers and children alike to avoid it.

Rather than applying the existing laws more stringently, we should encourage the safer and easier economic participation of young people, with reasonable working conditions and minimal exploitation, by granting them official recognition and some of the benefits of protection given to adult workers.

52a The Broadway, Sheerness, Sheppey, Kent

Censorship at IPC

From Francis Wheen

I have no wish to pick a fight with the outgoing editor of *New Scientist*, but I really must take issue with his letter in last week's NS, in which he suggested that it was 'disingenuous' to refer to the IPC censorship row of earlier this year when he wrote a leader criticising his magazine's proprietors. He now says that 'I went out of my way in that leader to point out that the question at issue was quite separate from editorial policy.' I'm afraid this is simply not true: far from going out of his way, he didn't even make that point once in his leader. He did, however, say the following:

A considerable merit of IPC Magazines Ltd over the years has been the editorial freedom of its publications. . . It is in the public interest that this freedom should be maintained - and that the immediate management of the magazines should be equally unfettered in their deliberations over the acceptance or exclusion of advertising matter. Unfortunately, that is no longer the case.

The clear implication of this passage is that editorial freedom has been interfered with.

Now if Dr Dixon wishes to make a distinction between editorial freedom and editorial policy, that's fair enough - but it's a rather niggling semantic point to make bearing in mind that it doesn't affect the charges of management interference, and also bearing in mind that Dr Dixon *did* say in his leader that *New Scientist's* 'editorial stance' had been affected. Editorial stance, editorial freedom, editorial policy - whatever phrase one prefers, the fact remains that Dr Dixon is now attempting to unsay what he said earlier this year. It would be interesting to know his reasons.

From James Lawrie

In your issue of 24 August, Mr. Bernard Dixon, Editor of *New Scientist*, writes, 'Thank you for publishing the letter from Paul Barker and I'. Is the *New Scientist* also going in for New Grammar? Flat 2, 24 Palace Court, London W2

Grumpy

From Paul Rotha

Personally I do not give a tinker's cuss about what your John Coleman thinks of the film *No Resting Place*, but I do care very much about what he writes about the actors. Happily, his views were wholly opposite to those expressed by critics in London, Venice, New York, Berlin, the Edinburgh and Cork film festivals and elsewhere when the film was first shown in 1951-52. No doubt he wasn't around at the time.

Croft Road, Wallingford, Oxon

I write on the very morning when the cost of stamps in our idiotic two-tier sheep-and-goats postal system has zoomed up, with what would appear to be the very minimum of warning, to the disgraceful sums of 10p and 8p (or 2/- and 1/6 in the good old days of proper money). A number of letters that I had written and stamped over the week-end had therefore to have an extra 1p stamp banged on to them, there being still no Sunday post (and I shall fight for its restoration as long as there is breath in me). In this tedious task of upgrading my letters I was aided by our charming sub-postmistress, beaming away in her fortified nook of anti-thief glass panels and metal grilles on which the P.O. insurance companies apparently insist and which look extremely incongruous in a small Devon village, flanked as they are by the other attractive features of this delightful all-purpose shop, items for which no protection at all is supplied – Black Magic chocs, post-cards (local views), garden implements, stationery, sacks of peat and, surprisingly, an assortment of pairs of socks.

But even when paying an outrageous 10p for a letter one has still not the faintest confidence that it will reach its destination next day, and the rubbishy 'success statistics' put out periodically by the boastful P.O. bear little relation to one's own experiences. I now have to send by Express service (at 69p a go, and shortly to zoom up in cost I have no doubt) anything of importance for London. What private individual can now afford to send either a telegram or parcel? A not very heavy book, posted to me the other day, cost the horrifying sum of 70p. The world's best and most efficient postal system has, in the short space of about five years, been totally ruined. There is no arguing this matter. It is a fact plain to all, except to the P.O. authorities whose attitude to their innumerable shortcomings appears to be entirely complacent.

As an old schoolmaster, I know when people need gingering up, and I would start at the very top with severe punishments. How, I wonder, does one remove a knighthood from somebody? Can Her Majesty ever be persuaded to de-dub? I see the ceremony taking place in the Tower, rather an alarming affair with drums rolling, as with poor old wronged Dreyfus when they tore off his badges. What, I ask myself, is the opposite of 'Arise, Sir William'? 'Sit down, William,' I suppose. Perhaps I am wronging Sir William too and he has his own sad story to tell of inefficiencies further down the line.

It is not, let me say at once, with postmen that one's squabble lies. They have always seemed to me a charmingly cheerful section of the service (welcome everywhere, you see, except to dogs) and speedy with it. But how good, I would like to know, is the *esprit de corps* in sorting offices? Is there any real urge to keep faith with the public, as in days gone by? Does Sir William ever pop unexpectedly up at an advanced hour with a 'well done' there and a smile here? Does anybody truly care? What has gone *wrong*? I was extremely shocked a month or so ago when posting, in the Highgate area, a letter with a 7p stamp on it to find a printed notice pasted to the pillar-

box which in substance said, in chilly terms, that it was no good posting anything but 9p letters as they alone would be attended to until further notice. Was there ever such cheek? I gather that the Hampstead area was similarly penalised. By whose authority, may one ask? Old age pensioners, not exactly rolling in cash, manifestly were making use of the 7p service and, as with many old persons, set great store by letters sent and received. How dare the authorities, for whatever period and for whatever reason, withdraw this cheaper postal amenity? The blood boils.

I made mention of complacency and I know it well enough when I see it as for years I have suffered from it myself. A number of readers of this page have, over the past three and a half years, been kind enough to write to me (and I do hope they won't be discouraged by the philatelic rise and I shall quite understand if it's just an 8p one) in undeservedly polite and, if I may say so, appreciative terms and only one of the correspondents has ever spotted this displeasing flaw, one of many, in my character. This was a disgruntled ex-postman, whom I may have mentioned before and who, rightly and crisply critical, made use of such telling phrases as 'It's all very well for an old trout like you to sit there and complain . . .' I have now lost the letter, and I am not too sure about the word 'trout' and I seem to remember that 'sit' came out, in point of fact, as 'squat on your silly fat bum', thus giving a much more accurate and vivid picture of self-satisfied bufferdom whining away from a plushy country seat. The burden of his cry was that I was seemingly unaware of the incon-

Roger Woddie On duty bent

'There seems to be a correlation between such persons (joggers) and homosexual nuisances.' – A police field manual.

While proceeding down the High Street,
Ruminating on my lot,
I observed the prisoner running
At a fairly steady trot.
He was wearing satin gym-shorts,
With his hair done up in bows,
And I came to the conclusion
That he must be one of those.

There was lewdness in his movements,
There was make-up on his face,
So I took hold of my truncheon
And immediately gave chase.
I pursued him past the tailor's
And the ironmonger's shop,
Till I caught him by the cobbles,
Thus compelling him to stop.

I then said I'd be appearing
As a witness for the Crown,
And I warned him any statement
Would at once be taken down.
But he shook his fist and shouted,
'Oh, don't be a silly sod –
Can't you see I'm from the Special
Anti-Homosexual Squad?'

venience of having to rise at 5 a.m., tog up as a postman and then bicycle 2 miles in pouring rain to deliver a rather blurred post-card of Dunstable to a Colonel Westmacott currently resident at 'Fairview', Station Crescent, Epping. I do see.

But to return to my complacency and general smugness, unattractive qualities that have been with me since childhood and of which numerous and repellently smiling snaps provide evidence. My parents were either too kind or too fond to notice these failings and were by no means averse to various prizes won (by 'slogging' rather than intelligence) at school and good reports gained by the odious and studious and prim little swot that I was. But my character was immediately apparent to a very unusual married pair who lived near us at Newbury. They sized me up in a flash and called me Horrid Little Arthur, or HLA for short, but were unaccountably fond of me and great encouragers of my theatrical keennesses. Their only child, a daughter called May, had died tragically of tuberculosis on the day that was my tenth birthday and, taking this as some strange sign from Above, they rapidly became, as was then a frequent happening, an adopted uncle and aunt, Charlie and Violet. No nicer or more stimulating couple ever existed. Violet played the piano brilliantly and by ear (I can see her now rattling off 'Poor Little Rich Girl' on our return from *On With The Dance*) and Charlie had been in his time a splendid amateur singer and comedian with a fund of merry comic songs which I found hilarious ('I Can't Keep My Beastly Eye-glass In My Eye' was a great favourite). He also gave a side-splitting imitation of Queen Victoria disapproving of something, and could also manage a cat-fight to the life (close your eyes and furiously hissing pussies were right there in the room with you).

Not wishing to linger on alone in Newbury in a house which held so many sad memories, they moved to London (Charlie was a stockbroker) and there then began a very happy period of my life, for every school holiday they invited me to stay for two nights, which meant two theatres and, on the last day, the afternoon house at the Coliseum (at least ten stunningly good variety acts) before being placed on the 6 p.m. train from Paddington (Newbury, 6.57). And thus it was that I saw, unforgettably, the original *No, No, Nanette* at the Palace Theatre (we were in the very front row of the Dress Circle and I nearly died of it), becoming Binnie Hale's slave for life, a performer of quite dazzling charm and excellence. And then there was a Cochran revue, *One Damn Thing After Another*, with Edythe Baker perched up at a white grand piano and playing an early Richard Rodgers number, the entrancing 'My Heart Stood Still', for which treat we were in the fourth row of the London Pavilion stalls and the closest I had ever been to the stage. Knowing that I worshipped the Hulberts, we went repeatedly to their revues (*By The Way, Clowns in Clover*, etc.) and, at dinner at the Trocadero before the theatre, Charlie would send messages to the orchestra to ask them to play tunes we all liked. And sometimes in the afternoon, Violet and I would sneak off (No. 9 bus from Kensington High Street) to a matinee of a play and wonderfully gifted people like Marie Tempest and Lilian Braithwaite and Yvonne Arnaud sailed into my life. I can only hope that my radiant face and wild excitement repaid them in some way for their endless kindnesses.

BOOKS IN GENERAL

Tom Paulin

And That's a Fact

Thomas Hardy: The Complete Poems edited by James Gibson *Macmillan* £30

The First Mrs Hardy by DENYS KAY-ROBINSON *Macmillan* £7.95

Thomas Hardy: Landscapes of the Mind by ANDREW ENSTICE *Macmillan* £10

Hardy wanted his neighbours to remember him as a nice old chap who was kind to hedgehogs and who liked to notice certain things – the winter stars, fresh silky leaves, the flight of a nightjar. He hoped for a kind of social immortality in which the residents of Dorchester would remember him as a kindly observer every time they glanced up at Orion or Capella. For years this was how his readers thought of him – he was extraordinarily ordinary, a great writer who was deliberately bourgeois and respectable. He lived like a shy stockbroker in a redbrick detached house, read *The Times* and talked about the weather when anyone called. In society he tried to be even more boring than Browning, whose dinner-table conversation, Hardy said, showed a 'smug Christian optimism worthy of a dissenting grocer'. Hardy did his best to be Mr Humdrum and let his readers know only what he wanted them to know, and this strategy worked until about 15 years ago, when various amateur scholars and literary antiquarians began to gather all kinds of information about his life.

They interviewed his neighbours and servants, and the gossipy afterlife he'd imagined for himself turned out to be intensely drab, cruel and banal. He was a dirty old man, the neighbours said, who was nasty to his wife and mean with money. A monograph appeared on his visits to the barber (he never left a tip), and gradually his imagination was buried under a mass of daft, dotty and utterly boring facts. Dreadful mysteries were investigated, guilty secrets explored, and any and every fact about him was collected. A scholarly paper was published on the dogs' graveyard in his garden and all kinds of mad hobby horses were ridden over his private life. Fifty years after his death, Hardy is remembered with such clarity and in such detail that there is no aspect of his life which has not been covered – the experts know everything about what bootlaces he bought and how often he changed his underpants.

Curiously, Hardy both invited and tried to prevent these crazy excavations of his private life. He told his second wife, Florence, to burn a mass of papers after his death, and he also arranged for her to publish his autobiography as her biography of him (it's an arrangement of facts with a formal commentary in the third person). He was so very secretive that eventually various quaint scholars began to view his life with all the grimy relish of an Edgar Lustgarten telling a tale of murder and judgment. Now, scarcely a month goes by without some new book about him. His work is cynically recommended by his publishers as 'an enduring memorial to English country life'.

His secretiveness naturally extended to his manuscripts, and this means that the variorum edition of his poems is an expensive folly. For each book of poems he left 'an accompanying bound-up volume of manuscripts', but as James Gibson glumly admits, these 'manuscripts' are really fair copies. Mostly they show that at proof-stage Hardy quite naturally altered the occasional word or line and tinkered with the punctuation. He destroyed all but a few rough drafts and left about a thousand fair copies. Here and there a word or line has been crossed out and Gibson gives a selection of these cancelled variants. His selection is based on a criterion of 'interest or importance', though most of the changes are so slight and uninteresting that he must have found it difficult to decide which tiny fact was less useless than another. Instead of calibrat-



ing the finer degrees of boredom he should either have ignored all the cancelled variants or included as many as he could decipher.

One of the few surviving rough drafts is on the back of an application form for an Ealing Corporation issue of five-per-cent stock, and Gibson seems to have edited every poem with the Stock Exchange Index in mind. Take 'I Look into my Glass':

- 1 I look into my glass,
- 2 And view my wasting skin,
- 3 And say, 'Would God it came pass
- 4 My heart had shrunk as thin!'
- 5 For then, I, undistress
- 6 By hearts grown cold to me,
- 7 Could lonely wait my endless rest
- 8 With equanimity.
- 9 But Time, to make me grieve,
- 10 Part steals, lets part abide;
- 11 And shakes this fragile frame at eve
- 12 With throbbings of noontide.

The numerals in the margin of this wry lyric make the lines look as though they've been set to a stopwatch (they could have been numbered in fives), and a glance at the notes they key reveals only that Hardy changed 'Glass' to

'glass', 'friendships lost' to 'hearts grown cold', dropped a hyphen and changed a comma into a semi-colon. The entire edition is like this – the notes show miniscule alterations which completely lack the fascination of, say, Yeats's revisions.

We learn that Hardy changed 'pencil and paper' to 'paper and pencil', that he added a comma here and dropped one there, and that a full stop in one line was missing from some copies of the collected poems but that Hardy's copy 'has been altered to include it'. A few changes are interesting in that they show how at the last minute Hardy could transform a drab phrase into something marvellous and arresting: the 'original air-blue gown' in 'The Voice' used to be the 'original hat and gown', and the lovely 'younger, younger she freshed' was once the dull 'younger, younger she grew'. And the great last line of 'During Wind and Rain' – 'Down their carved names the raindrop ploughs' – sprang out of the very ordinary, 'On their chiselled names the lichen grows'. But for the most part the notes show that 'grey gaunt lonesome' was revised to 'grey, gaunt, lonely', or that Hardy altered 'inflexible' to 'rigid'. Really Gibson should have produced an annotated edition like Ricks's Tennyson rather than this monstrous gathering of minor variants.

Denys Kay-Robinson's amiably nutty book is an attempt to view Hardy's marriage 'through Emma Hardy's eyes'. It's a good idea, but my confidence in Mr Kay-Robinson's ability was shaken by this sentence from his opening paragraph:

Before the constantly increasing power of men, many of whom had risen from nothing, all of whom seemed to have materialised from nowhere, the dismayed minor landed gentry (those who did not belong to the aristocracy), members of the professions and persons of leisure, found both their influence and their affluence becoming submerged by a tide that, unlike marine tides, did not stop rising.

Kay-Robinson weirdly speculates that Emma's elderly brother-in-law 'was not necessarily incapable yet of mounting a female'; and he suggests that Hardy's father 'would see nothing heinous in a few cheerful deflowerings, nor the girls in being deflowered'. Like a voyeur in a graveyard, he lingers over Hardy's 'possible experiments in practical sex', and then considers the eccentric notion that Sue Bridehead is based on Emma. His dithering prurience becomes rapidly preposterous:

Narrow-minded she was not, but Sue's custom of tempting men while always too fastidious to have carnal relations with them – even with the student with whom she told Jude she had lived – may, if indeed Emma had found herself frigid during the early years of wedlock, have seemed like a cruel lampoon.

Kay-Robinson collects bits of distant gossip and innuendo, and he catalogues the Hardys' physical ailments with much zest – there is a great deal of flu, laryngitis and bladder trouble in his account. At one point he wonders if Hardy ever sang 'Champagne Charley'; at another he mentions that Hardy 'surprised everyone by giving little Ethel a glass of hock.' He rummages around and discovers alkaline douches, sick headaches, slammed doors, angry words and possible reconciliations, so that the Hardys' long marriage is publicly displayed in all its irrelevant accident. Tasteless and extravagant speculations jostle with accounts of long-forgotten tea parties and seaside outings 'for the girls of Mrs Bartelot's

Needlework Guild'. Often it seems that the Hardys are still fighting it out at Max Gate while the servants eavesdrop and report back to the biographers.

Kay-Robinson's sexual curiosity is so boundless and so very innocent that he appears oddly baffled and decent as he searches the marital battlefield for significant facts. His account is essentially harmless and often hilarious, and though it extends the horizons of banality it is a generous attempt to answer Gittings's mean-spirited version of the same subject. In some ways I prefer this new biography – the Hardys may not have had as much fun as the Joyces, but in his warm-hearted way Kay-Robinson does his best to prove that they weren't tremendously miserable and may even have been rather happy together.

Andrew Enstice is also an eccentric amateur. He has discovered that the Dorchester Borough Council bought a new fire engine in 1849, and he has consulted ancient street directories in an effort to fathom the 'reality' of Casterbridge. Sometimes he writes like a rustic Wallace Stevens, as in this comment on Gabriel Oak's flute-playing:

Man, forming new patterns from Nature, casts the clarity of his mind upon the regulated confusion of the untamed world. We are drawn inexorably in upon the sound of the flute, to expand again within the new world; we are inside the things described before, and are launched upon an exploration of possibilities from within.

Landscapes of the Mind is full of such zany outbursts which take us 'inside the things described before' and say nothing in a manner that is endearingly mystified. Enstice is an idealistic topographer who is deeply confused about fact and fiction – as he says, 'concrete and abstract seem to dissolve into one overwhelming perception'. One of his overwhelming perceptions is that children 'are both the future of the race and the ever-present reminder of the passing of the years which wipes clean the briefly-marked slate of one thinking life'. The spirit of Wessex so absorbs him that he would prefer Hardy's novels to be entirely about landscape, and he is worried that actual villages and railway lines are 'excluded from all mention of their existence unless directly relevant to the story'. However, Enstice's almost mystical sense of 'self-contained landscape' allows him to commune happily with 'the great green body of Wessex'.

Although his book says nothing new, Enstice's manner of chuntering sweetly to himself is strangely touching – a kind of mellow ghostly voice flickers through his naive prose and murmurs mildly like the social ghosts in 'Friends Beyond'. It makes a pleasant change from Kay-Robinson's robust staggers at sense, though I'm left wondering at the judgment of the Macmillan editors and readers. In various ways all these books are monuments to the dead spirit, to the fatal futility of fact.

Among this week's contributors:

TOM PAULIN's first collection of poems was *A State of Justice* (Faber, 1977).

SEAN HIGNETT is working on a biography of Dorothy Brett.

RICHARD RATHBONE teaches history at the School of Oriental and African Studies. His books include *The Population Factor in Tropical Africa*.

Richard Rathbone

Gold Bugs

The Boer War by THOMAS PAKENHAM
Weidenfeld £10

My grandfather's bookshelves groaned with books about the South African War with marvellous titles like *Sword and Stirrup* and *Impressions of a Doctor in Khaki*. There was a large contemporary literature on the war and wave on wave of later scholarship, so on the face of it there seemed to be little new that Thomas Pakenham could add. Ostensibly it is a war that ranks high on any scale of geopolitical unimportance. Who, beyond those who read fading rolls-of-honour in British churches and the keepers of the Volk-memory in South Africa, knows or cares anything about it? Boy Scouts can trace their founder's success to the defence of Mafeking; the British General Staff of the Great War won chestfuls of medals on the *veldt* and a bit of Liverpool Football Club is named after the bloody struggle for Spion Kop. It seemed odd that Pakenham had spent eight years of research on a squalid little colonial war. But he answers such doubts with scholarship and empathy from the first page of this long and finely researched book.

It is pre-eminently a definitive classical military history. But it is very much more than that. First, Pakenham grasps a particularly

vexatious historiographical nettle in his treatment of the *casus belli*. Though his analysis begs questions, he shows with a deal of evidential support that the substance of J. A. Hobson's journalistic attack, for so long rejected as naive conspiracy theory, was correct. The war was precipitated by the deft manipulation of the most significant gold magnates operating on the Witwatersrand, the 'Randlords'. Their motives were not jingoistic although they achieved popular British support for their aims behind a carefully orchestrated crescendo of patriotic hysteria. Their partner in crime was Joseph Chamberlain's High Commissioner in South Africa, the great Alfred Milner. His motive was a devotion to an expansionist imperial destiny. Milner had political power in British-ruled Southern Africa, influential friends both inside and outside the British Cabinet, experience of finance both in Egypt and on the Board of the Inland Revenue, knowledge of the Press from his days with W. T. Stead, and a lot of ambition. The combination of his rule in Cape Town and the interests of the 'gold bugs' made this dreadful war virtually inevitable.

The South African Republic, the Boer-ruled Transvaal, had at its heart the huge gold potential of the Rand which had been discovered in 1886. The Randlords' growing impatience with Paul Kruger and the Volksraad had very little to do with their propaganda which dwelt on the Republic's ill-treatment of non-nationals, or Uitlanders, working on the Reef. It was concerned, rather, with the appalling dilemma that Kruger faced. He and his fellow parliamentarians represented a largely rural, pre-industrial society. The reforms the Randlords demanded, the kind of large-scale state mod-

Chamber Music

DORIS GRUMBACH

'The contrast between mandarin manner and horrifying matter is what makes this novel extraordinary'

Victoria Glendinning, *The Observer*

'It is as if Willa Cather had decided to tell the whole truth. It is Virginia Woolf without the prettifying.'

John Leonard, *New York Times*

'The spartan freshness of tone of *Chamber Music* – its air of having been written, longhand, in one sitting – is extremely effective.'

John Naughton, *The Listener*

HAMISH HAMILTON £5.50

ernisation that would have directed cheap labour to the mines and slanted State expenditure towards serving the new industry, would, Kruger knew, have undermined for all time the very constituency he represented. This, in essence, was the core of the conflict. But it was sold to the flag-waving public in very different terms. Kruger was presented as an anti-British, pro-German ogre, a tyrannical oppressor of blacks and Britons who lived in the Republic. What Milner called 'the enormous material value of the thing involved' was subtly concealed.

Some bizarre figures master-minded the public-relations exercise. Percy Fitzpatrick, an employee of Wernher-Beit, the biggest gold concern on the Rand, and later a recipient of a knighthood and author of *Jock of the Bushveld*, emerges as a key figure. But Milner had friends in higher places too. George Wyndham, the Parliamentary Secretary in the War Office, wrote to Milner in 1899: 'The Press are ready and under complete control. I can switch agitation at your direction. The French and German shareholders . . . are in line.' Wyndham had been Chairman of the South African Association, the principal expansionist lobby in England at the time. Pakenham concludes that 'the Gold Bugs, contrary to the accepted view of later historians, were the active partners with Milner in the making of the war'.

But the partners in crime did not foot the massive bill at the end of the very long day. The British tax-payer was stung for £200 million. Not since 1815 had any British campaign been so profligate with life and limb. Just under 500,000 troops served under British colours and nearly a fifth of them were casualties. Something like ten per cent of a total Boer fighting force of over 80,000 died. Between 18,000 and 28,000 Afrikaners died in one of the War's grimmest innovations, the concentration camps. These were introduced by Kitchener to deny the Boer guerrillas material support from a friendly country population. Naturally, most of these victims were women and children. In the scorched-earth policy that accompanied the establishment of concentration camps most of the Boers' rural capital literally went up in smoke, creating an instant post-war white, Afrikaans-speaking proletariat.

But Pakenham is especially to be applauded for stressing the role of Africans in this 'white man's war'. The economies of both the Cape and Natal, as well as those of the Transvaal and the Free State, were kept running by Africans throughout the conflict. The military innovations of the war – extensive trenches, earthworks and blockhouses – were built by Africans. But even more strikingly, Pakenham laments our ignorance of the black combatants on both sides. 107,000 'black Boers' were incarcerated in the concentration camps. 10,000 blacks served as soldiers with the British forces and 30,000 more performed non-combatant roles. Large numbers of blacks fought side by side with Boer burghers. We do not know how many died, were maimed or had their property destroyed.

Through this carnage Britain achieved control of the Rand. The Bank of England now had a vast gold vault underground, and the Randlords a receptive, modernising state to work within. Milner and his kindergarten 'reconstructed' the devastated Transvaal with carefully thought-through policies of social engineering. He reconciled the warring white

communities at the price of the blacks of South Africa, a price that is still being exacted. When the wills of Alfred Beit and Julius Wernher (the two greatest Randlords) were proved, they turned out to be those of the two richest men in the history of Somerset House. The answer to *cui bono* is relatively simple.

Ken Coates

Rock Solid

The Awkward Warrior – Frank Cousins, his Life and Times by GEOFFREY GOODMAN
Davis-Poynter £15

How much power do the great hierarchs of trade unionism actually hold? Sir Harold Wilson has been running a quiet little campaign, in the *Financial Weekly* of all places, to explain that these functionaries are 'not too strong but too weak, to the extent that too much power has moved from general secretaries and executives to local shop stewards . . .' There is some little evidence to show that this trend does exist in fact, even if it is anything but universal. In the good old days, there was Carron's Law, which said, quite simply, that the President of the AEU could do what he liked with his members' votes at Labour and union conferences, whether they approved or not. Lord Carron was a confirmed supporter of law and order, as well as a Governor of the Bank of England. Nowadays, however, the AUEW vote only goes the way of the Establishment by procedural accident, which is afterwards loudly and repeatedly (ritually?) regretted.

If it is truly becoming more and more difficult for union leaders to misrepresent their members, then the one person more than any other who is responsible for Sir Harold's discomfiture is Frank Cousins, the hero of Geoffrey Goodman's outstanding biography. The Transport and General Workers' Union is not merely Britain's largest union: at several key junctures it has been a pace-setter. If any one of the half-dozen largest unions sets trends which rank-and-file members find helpful, it is very difficult for the others to remain unaffected. Bridlington notwithstanding, membership allegiances can change. Until Moss Evans took over the awesome responsibility of holding together this vast federation, itself a miniature Trades Union Congress, the T&GWU had known five general secretaries since its inauguration. In the first phase there was Bevin, followed by Deakin, and then for a momentary interlude Tiffin. The second phase began with Cousins and was carried through by Jack Jones. 'Jones has been the General: Cousins was the Messiah,' said one trade unionist, and Goodman finds this characterisation so apt that he uses it as almost the last word with which to wind up this large and useful book.

During the first phase, Bevin built a powerfully centralised amalgamation, and Deakin was associated with its drift into bureaucratic formalism, and the potent alliances which it made with various doctrinaire right-wingers who dominated the TUC and policed the Labour Party during the last years of Attlee's

administration and the heyday of the Bevanite rebellion. In those days, the communist party was proscribed and its members banned from holding office in the union, while 'unorthodox views were treated as heresy'. Frank Cousins was a heretic, and his unexpected accession to office, carefully described in these pages in an entirely convincing and balanced account, began a process of destalinisation. Arbitrary powers were first questioned, then challenged, then made accountable. Democratic argument broke out, in the beginning tentatively, and later with compulsive force. But although this process was organised and controlled from a firm centre, it did not stop halfway. Cousins was not to follow Khrushchev into a premature dacha, and Jones was no Brezhnev. Indeed, many of the changes most regretted by Sir Harold Wilson were in fact carried through by Jack Jones on the basis of the preliminary work done by his predecessor and mentor.

In 1968, the T&GWU had 530 full-time officers and just one and a half million members. By 1974 it had 485 professional organisers and 1,857,000 members. This spectacular assault upon conventional bureaucratic wisdom was solidly based upon the vigorous devolution of bargaining powers and the development of a real army of part-time negotiators and voluntary workers. The more democratic the union became, the more it grew. Today, it is fair to suggest that this is an impediment at least, maybe even an obstacle, both to the plans of monetarist barbarians in Government, and to the lesser plots of failed oppositional social-democrats. If the skilful intrigues of the Campaign for Democratic Socialism (and all its convoluted succession) have borne fruit in many other unions, producing a rich quota of manipulated Conference surprises, they have not had the slightest influence on the T&GWU.

This, a real part of the Cousins story, is only partly told in the Goodman biography. It could not be concluded without Volume Two, which would need to contain an account of Jack Jones's work and influence. To trace the process through, a somewhat different kind of book would be needed: and indeed it will be impossible to make sense of recent labour history until we have got it.

In the meantime, this particular book not only sets a number of records straight, but provides a fascinating account of the work of the lesser Frank Cousins, who was seconded by his executive to become by far the most sympathetic member of the Wilson administrations of 1964 and 1966. Sir Harold's virtuosity was unimpaired throughout the events described in these pages, and the middle was played against both ends with consummate artistry. Frank Cousins could not follow these convolutions of relativist morality, but he simply stuck it out and tried. When it was obvious that trying was no use, he went back to the union.

One of the results of this choice is that we might still save democracy in this country. When we have exhausted the panaceas of social democracy (humanist ethics based on permanent full employment), and run through the skills and attributes of Labour front-benchers (the devotion to principle of Mr Callaghan, the ingenious planning of Denis Healey, the courageous advocacy of Eric Varley, the liberalism of Merlyn Rees, and, all the time in reserve, Sir Harold Wilson's notable honesty), we arrive at the foundation of our

material defences. I, for one, sleep sounder during nights which might otherwise be haunted by the Thatchers and the Josephs because of this two-million strong body of Cousins's men. Perhaps, as Sir Harold would no doubt argue, solidarity is no substitute for brains, but it is still a serviceable virtue, and one of which we shall all, soon, have great need.

Andrew Motion

In Retreat

The Slant Door by GEORGE SZIRTES *Secker* £3.50

Fiction by PETER READING *Secker* £3.50

From the House Opposite by JOHN MOLE *Secker* £3.50

Blue Wine by JOHN HOLLANDER *Johns Hopkins University* £5.50 and £2.75

Memorials of the Quick and the Dead by MAUREEN DUFFY *Hamish Hamilton* £4.95

Six years ago, in *Thomas Hardy and British Poetry*, Donald Davie claimed that Hardy's 'engaging modesty' and 'decent liberalism' constituted 'a crucial selling short of his poetic vocation, for himself and his successors'. There was in fact some praise mixed with this blame, but it was too equivocally phrased to prevent the demerits of Hardy's influence seeming greater than the merits. Subsequently, signs of gentility in poets have often been traced back to Hardy, usually via his most illustrious disciple, Larkin. And because, according to Davie, Larkin's own poetry is one of 'lowered sights and patently diminished expectations', anyone who now works in the same tradition is threatened with a double constraint. Their work risks being passed through two fine sieves which remove creative ambition and leave 'apparent meanness of spirit, a painful modesty of intention and extremely limited objectives'.

This is, of course, a highly contentious argument. It barely avoids decreasing the stature of Hardy and Larkin, and sometimes convicts them of faults which are more evident in their incompetent admirers than themselves. But it does have a few overriding strengths. And one of them is the implication that much of the most feeble contemporary British poetry is characterised not by bad writing as such, but by a failure of imaginative nerve. In many cases modesty is used as a mask for timidity, large themes are ignored or pursued at a respectful distance, and the preferred tone of voice is, in Davie's words, 'cravenly apologetic'.

The books under review illustrate this with depressing frequency. In various ways, most of them offer an almost abject reticence as their chief virtue. George Szirtes's first collection, *The Slant Door*, for instance, is continuously intelligent and well-crafted, but suffers from an excess of modesty: its themes and techniques are circumscribed by too absolute a reserve. In order to get a licence for this, he often glances over Larkin's shoulder to where Hardy stands in the background, signalling approval. But instead of emulating his masters' voices and achievements, he only man-

ages to raise echoes and fragments: some racehorses reminiscent of those in 'At Grass', and 'a cat that longs to be off elsewhere' – presumably to join the one struggling in 'Lines on a Young Lady's Photograph Album'. These and other debts only increase the book's air of constraint, and their effect is consolidated by another restrictive strategy: classical allusion. The racehorse owners who habitually use it, like the 'Grecian' bull and 'mythic' fields which appear elsewhere, tend to transform the random into the fixed, and the active into the passive. Although such conversions allow Szirtes to write with a degree of elegance, they also prevent him from exploring the tensions which lie beneath the polished surfaces of his work. Loss of innocence, fear of death, and loneliness make periodic attempts to loom as large in his art as they do in life, but he will not – at the moment – risk confronting or including them.

Much the same can be said of Peter Reading – only while Szirtes is decorous, he is hilarious. That is to say, he uses humour as the means of keeping a protective distance between himself and his more disagreeable experiences. But what is good for his peace of mind is not necessarily good for his poetry. Although often amusing (and no doubt particularly enjoyable at public readings), it seldom lives up to the claims that he occasionally makes for it. Like most predominantly comic writers, he is anxious to be taken seriously, and repeatedly comes up with a grave thought in mid-chuckle. But because the success of his humour depends to a large extent on the reduction of individuals to types, and emotions to attitudes, he is seldom able to realise his more profound human concerns in much detail.

This is not to say that comedy is bound to be less serious than tragedy, but that comedy which fails to partake fully enough of the world it derives from is liable to inconsequence. And this is invariably Reading's fate: the significance of his main theme ('Even one's self is wholly fictitious') is dissipated by the indulgently spun-out stories and jokes which comprise much of his book. No matter how often they refer to his ostensible concern with identity, they are too easily satisfied with themselves to bother with it for long.

John Mole is not as funny as Reading. Instead of jolly mordancy, he goes in for very low-key fantasies – presumably hoping to retain palpable contact with his serious concerns. But a crucial lack of vigour means they seldom emerge with much force. In 'The Tales of Rover', for example, he investigates the frustrations of bourgeois comfort without ever managing to escape them. Wit degenerates into silliness, the macabre becomes fanciful, and his spirit of revolt is resolved into mere playfulness. This is largely because his attention, during the long course of the poem, is deflected away from his original subject on to the character of its speaker: a philosophical dog. And this shift in emphasis is reproduced in a number of other poems. Although Mole insists that 'To live by images/Defines what can be said', the images that he uses tend to conceal rather than elucidate his feelings. The result is modesty of a similar kind to that which inhibits Szirtes. Mole is an unfailingly scrupulous craftsman, but behind a protective screen of children's stories, nature poems, and accounts of domestic life, there are signs of a more anxious and ambitious poet trying to get out. Until he does so, the threats and fragility

of his familiar existence can only receive passing mention.

Americans, as Davie points out, are commonly exempt from this tyrannical caution – but their ambition is not necessarily its own reward. John Hollander is a case in point. His new collection describes a wide range of experience in confidently rhetorical terms, and seldom seems more than swaggering or pompous. To his credit, he is conscious of this tendency, but he is never sufficiently self-ironising to get away with it. Poem after poem slips into posturing, and object by object is buried in a plethora of detail. Even a turd becomes 'The half-dried, grey serpent-stump an unleashed dog left/To affront the carelessness of our steps'. Such wordiness is as reductive as the other poets' discretion – mainly because it does not allow him to build a firm enough foundation for his more abstract thoughts. This is particularly evident in the title poem, 'Blue Wine'. As each section comes to an end it closes in on itself, hiding its meanings and their relationship to the world. It is a form of literary narcissism; not surprisingly the wine 'broods on its own sleep' just as – elsewhere – a sunset is 'absorbed in itself' and clouds 'read their own shadows'.

Maureen Duffy is more far-reaching than Hollander, but where his poems fade in beautifully expelled sighs, hers destroy themselves in angry complaining. (Or at least her elegies do; her 'Memorials of the Quick' perish at the other extreme – in uncritical celebration.) Her poetic resources are simply not deep enough to meet the demands made on them by her political conscience. Nigeria, Northern Ireland, Portugal, Chile and elms all get her sympathy but her powers of expression

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never match the integrity of her response. In spite of its sincerity, her sense of communion with suffering cannot help being let down by monotonous rhythms and the substitution of crude statement for subtle analysis.

Hilary Spurling

Lift-Off

Diaghilev by RICHARD BUCKLE *Weidenfeld*
£12.50

From the age of 10 Diaghilev was brought up in Perm where his family (who had made their money in vodka) were treated like royalty and which, according to Igor Vinogradoff, was the model for the dull provincial town of Chekhov's *Three Sisters*. In 1903, when Diaghilev was editing an arts magazine designed to change the face of Russia, Chekhov politely but firmly refused to be roped in as literary editor; but one can't help feeling he might have taken a certain sardonic satisfaction in the grandiose and utterly impractical vision – so unlike the humble, hopeless dreams of his own three sisters – which ensured that Diaghilev at least got away from Perm.

Diaghilev was never in doubt as to what he meant to do, only where and how to do it: he tried singing, composing (abandoned on the advice of Rimsky-Korsakov who said he had no talent), art criticism, and made his first (and last) sensation in Russia with a show of historic Russian painting which dazzled everyone from the Emperor downwards. A combination of accidents saw to it that in the event he worked in exile and with ballet as his vehicle, but nothing altered his original ambition to stir things up on a grand scale: 'I see the future through a magnifying glass,' he wrote at 26, and Richard Buckle's splendid retrospect makes it plain that he was right.

For 20 crucial years when the arts this century were in ferment, no one anticipated developments so accurately or with such passion as Diaghilev. As students in St Petersburg he and his friends had been electrified by the *Sleeping Beauty* of Tchaikovsky and Petipa ('Unforgettable matinée – I lived in a dream for three hours, intoxicated with fairies and princesses,' wrote Bakst, who claimed that the production determined his vocation); and one might say that in a sense Diaghilev's entire career was an attempt to recreate the intensity of that first night. Henry Moore (who told Lord Goodman that his own life was changed by Picasso's drop curtain for *Le Train bleu* in 1924) may stand for two whole pre- and post-first world war generations in Paris and London whose world was never the same again after encountering the Diaghilev ballet.

Colossal nerve and cheek, as well as the fury of a man possessed, lay behind Diaghilev's attack: when the first audience booed Nijinsky's *Après-midi d'un faune* in 1911, he made them sit through it immediately again on the grounds that no one could hope to understand anything so new at a single viewing. He thoroughly approved people fighting throughout Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* the year after, and was no more put out

14 years later when the old guard tried to wreck his pro-Soviet ballet *Le Pas d'acier*. Many of his dancers, who had seldom been outside Russia before, descended on Paris in a panic. Karsavina, who secretly thought that the streets would be polished like a ballroom floor, lived in terror of being thought provincial (until she realised that the street urchins mobbing her were in fact simply applauding her chic); Lopukhova fainted dead away at first glimpse of the Gard du Nord ('the lovely sight was too much for her'). Diaghilev himself was 'inwardly faint with fear and doubt' when plans fell through, facilities were cancelled and the imperial subsidy withdrawn for his first season; but his only outward move was to order the Théâtre du Châtelet redecorated from top to bottom in red cloth with velvet drapes.

He had arrived in France without a sou to pay for the company, was bankrupt by the end of the engagement and continued for the rest of his life to mount spectacles of a luxury unparalleled (as the *Daily Mail* reported in 1912) by Nero or Sardanapalus while remaining almost permanently on the rocks. His financial unscrupulousness was as fabulous as his aesthetic opportunism, and seems to have had much the same effect on people in a position to bail him out. When Karsavina had danced for two years without payment, Sir Joseph Beecham turned up one day in her dressing room to settle Diaghilev's account with £2000 in notes; another time Coco Chanel handed over 300,000 francs on condition he never mentioned the transaction to her or anyone else again; of all his backers from Tsar Nicholas onwards, only Lord Rothermere sank to making the majestic Diaghilev crawl for his money's worth.

Otherwise he remained as enigmatic on the financial as on all other fronts. The various stages of his love affairs were signalled in a code decipherable only by his intimates, from the current favourite's first appearance in plus fours or a straw boater to those moments of silent icy terror precipitated whenever Nijinsky or Massine so much as set eyes on a woman: scenes which recall nothing so much as the ritual slaughter of *Schéhérazade*, or that sinister climax in Balanchine's *The Prodigal Son* when the harlot loops herself around her victim's waist, one hand clasping her ankle, and slithers slowly to the ground.

This suggestiveness lies at the furthest extreme from Buckle's biographical method, which rests on the patient, systematic, unrhapsodical and almost wholly unspeculative accumulation of dates and details of programmes, payments, production schedules, press coverage, tours, tickets and travelling arrangements. *Diaghilev* is written with a scholarly flatness admirably calculated to throw into high relief the gigantic extravagance of its imponderable subject, while at the same time imposing order on the general shambles induced by a cast exhibiting almost infinite varieties of the Russian and/or theatrical temperament (a fraudulent combination nicely illustrated by Diaghilev's own story of his valet offering to poison Pavlova or Khesinskaya or any other villainous ballerina plotting against his master's will). Documentation on this scale makes the reader gasp and stretch his eyes at the aesthetic and financial gambles Diaghilev brought off; but it also provides as clear a glimpse as anyone will probably ever manage of the practical machinery which enabled him to work his

impossible magic. Anyone who has toiled through this mighty volume – 600 pages long and well over a kilo in weight – will have some inkling of what Diaghilev meant when he defined his function to the inquisitive King of Spain: 'Your Majesty, I'm like you. I don't work, I do nothing, but I am indispensable.'

Jeremy Tambling

Caged

Birdy by WILLIAM WHARTON *Cape* £4.95
Beltran in Exile by WILLIAM WATSON *Chatto & Windus* £5.95
The Rothschild Connection by PETER BUCKMAN *Secker* £5.50
New Arrivals, Old Encounters by BRIAN ALDISS *Cape* £4.50

The mental hospital may have succeeded the prison in providing us with the most poignant image of our society. It may also make it impossible to apply confident opinions about what is sanity, or what it could be, in our present circumstances. (Thus Wittgenstein, after having conversation with an inmate of such a hospital, came away saying, 'I find this man more intelligent than any of his doctors'.) William Wharton's novel, his first, raises such issues in a compelling fashion.

If one says at the start that it goes over the top at times (as when the boy Birdy dreams himself into a copulatory state with Perta, the female canary in his life), then the ground has been cleared to say it's funny, sad and interesting by turns. *Birdy* is set in a military mental hospital just after the war, and the narrative is divided between Al, a young soldier who has been nearly blown to pieces, and his friend, Birdy, who has been certified because he has lapsed into a state of complete self-identification with birds. Al is trying to communicate with him, so tells him about their boyhood together; he talks in a kind of Holden Caulfield style: our early sense that he's too limited and boorish to be interesting modifies sharply during the book, and we're ready to accept him as a symbol of life that has the urge to go on, no matter how many skies have fallen.

Birdy, while he is being talked to, has a parallel narrative that never breaks out of its shell of solipsism till the end: it begins with over-large statements making you fear that portentous comments about civilisation are coming – as indeed they do, in a sub-Rousseauish way ('We built this cage, civilisation, because we could think, and now we have to think because we're caught in our cage. I'm sure there's a real world still there if I can only get out of the cage.'). But there's a grittiness about the writing that does convince for large sections; in Birdy's talk this is combined with an unsentimental and incredibly detailed account of how canaries do live in cages. Birdy's fascination draws us in; we are impelled, like him, towards that world. His desire to free the birds is one to align himself with them in their escape. But that ducking-out, given his circumstances and the war, can only prove a huis clos; at the end, the two mauled victims of their society – mentally and physically so – confront each other with some

little understanding, and desire to get out.

The dichotomy between the individual and his conditioning society is a little too broad; the escapism is often just that, but there's a toughness of approach as well. The callousness of the New Jersey society is caught in a scabrously funny chapter describing how the boys go stray-dog-catching for money (Birdy needs money to buy seed to feed his vastly augmented canary stock). Funny and awful as well, as we get the details about killing the dogs: after gassing them they have to electrocute them: finally they're reduced to having them ground up in mincers at the knackery, where the meat is turned into dog-food. In such chapters you feel the book's breadth of vision: the age-old symbol of the bird as the soul isn't quite forgotten as you read.

We are, by contrast, in a world of firm moral values with *Beltran in Exile*. It's a very distant world indeed (no irony intended) – that of the Templars, who I don't suppose have been put into fiction since *Ivanhoe*. It doesn't read as easily as Wharton's book: it gives the impression of being a little too self-conscious. But then that's a fate all too likely to occur with historical novels. Watson carefully avoids sensationalism: he doesn't speculate about whether the Templars were an heretical body or not, or a kind of Masonic secret society, as has been done, and apart from making Boniface VIII dash his brains out in prison (a demonstrably false medieval legend), he doesn't romanticise.

The main problem with the book is how much Watson doesn't tell you. You may know about the end of the Crusades in 1291 when Acre fell to the soldiers of the Sultan of Egypt: you may know about the constitution of the Templars, that monkish body of knights founded in 1119, about the Grand Master, their wealth, their practices: you may know about Boniface VIII's capture at Agnani in 1303 – 'Christ led captive in the person of his vicar', as Dante, who nonetheless imagined this Pope fairly far down (literally) in Hell, put it. You may know about Philip the Fair's handling of the Avignon Papacy and his suppression of the Templars for their money in 1313. But if you don't, you'll find the going tough with this account of the Last of the Templars, journeying from Acre to Scotland, with treasure and the heart of one of the Templars whose dying wish it was to have it buried at Balantrodoch. Watson is not a man for explanatory historical background, and the whole thing reads a bit cryptically at times. The novel ends impressively with a scene at the cathedral in Vienne; but generally the whole thing is slow and a little dull.

The territory's more familiar in *The Rothschild Connection*; indeed there's a feeling of *recherche du temps perdu* as we are introduced to Marx, Engels, Heine, James Rothschild (the son of the original German financier), Ledru-Rollin, Balzac, Proudhon, Lamartine and Haussmann during the course of a mildly interesting thriller about the theft of three million francs from Rothschild's railway-speculating business. Set in Paris for the period of ten years after 1846, the narrator, Rothschild's accountant, is the thief, and a pretty unpleasant character he sounds, though I don't think the author intended him to come over that way. A fair if unexciting read, since you know from the start he's got away with it all.

Brian Aldiss's latest collection of science fiction and futuristic speculations will appeal

to those who like their fantasies given a dressing of Arnoldian high seriousness. My loss, no doubt, but I am left a little cold by such solemnities as 'the universe has a dark corner, the human soul, which is its reflection' – the winning contribution of a five-year-old to a galaxy-wide competition. A bureaucratic nirvana is nicely described in one short story, 'A Spot of Konfrontation': another, 'One Blink of the Moon' is effectively phantasmagoric and spooky; but too often the entertainment is overlaid with vague gestures towards presumed significance.

Derek Mahon

J. G. Farrell 1935-1979

The novelist J. G. Farrell, who died recently in County Cork, was a remarkable writer and a remarkable man. He published six novels, of which the last three – the famous 'Empire Trilogy' – brought him celebrity and financial security and enabled him to retire from his little flat in Egerton Gardens, SW3, to a farm-house on the shore of Bantry Bay. That was in April of this year. Four months later he slipped from a rock while fishing and was swept out to sea. He leaves behind the memory of a charming and brilliant man, and three superb novels. Not an immense output, perhaps; but Jim found his voice slowly. Stricken by polio while at Oxford, he spent



some time in hospital – an experience recorded in *The Lung* (1964) – and emerged prematurely grey-haired and less robust than before. His mature personality – and he was a hilarious conversationalist – combined melancholy and grotesquerie in a uniquely Jim-like way. His weary drawl, paradoxically expressive of continual surprise, sometimes of 'alarm' or 'dismay' – two of his favourite words – lent itself to affectionate imitation; and the voice of the man is exactly the voice of the narrator of *A Girl in the Head* (1967), *Troubles* (1970), *The Siege of Krishnapur* (1973) and *The Singapore Grip* (1978).

His death came as a blow to his friends –

and for a solitary man he had a great many – but it comes, too, as a blow to literature. He was 43 when he died, and in his prime. Who knows what magnificence he might have given us? For, marvellous as the 'Empire Trilogy' is, it was only the beginning of something. One sensed that his artistic ambitions were large, although he himself would have repudiated the idea. No question of a routine re-issue of the famous whimsicality every few years. He would have attempted something more demanding. He measured himself, I suspect, against the giants of modern literature; and, given the time, he might have joined them. Many readers found the *Grip* disappointing; but not this reader. True, the military bits sometimes become tedious, as they do in *War and Peace*; but the central metaphor of the 'grip' of European capital on the Far East at that period, and the sense of life as an expanding-and-contracting organism, are ingeniously explored. This 'organic' motif (he had an x-ray vision of society), and the recurrent symbolism of vegetable decay and animal encroachment, make these books poems in prose as well as historical reconstructions and comic masterpieces. They are also a belated swan-song for the British Empire, whose still-visible remains this author contemplated with qualified affection. Like many Anglo-Irish people, he loved Ireland and was yet intensely English. Consider the Major, perhaps Farrell's best-known character, lecturing dog-lovers on how to handle their pets during the Japanese air-raids, or wincing at the sight of a French diplomat using his (the Major's) old school tie as a belt.

The Singapore Grip is, I believe, his finest book; but, like most Farrellites, I lost my heart to *Troubles*, that strange, haunting story set in a crumbling hotel in Co. Wexford during the Anglo-Irish War, in which the Major, a younger man than in the *Grip*, makes his first gloomy appearance. On the first page occurs the sentence, 'A few years later still the Majestic itself followed the boats and preceded the pines into oblivion by burning to the ground.' It was that 'and preceded the pines' that hooked me. Here was a novelist who stood back, who took the long view. There is nothing meretricious or merely topical about Farrell's work; it has the detachment and repose of great art. Which is not to say that it lacks humanity. On the contrary, an important part of Jim's make-up was a vivid and compassionate humanism which embraced Dives and Lazarus, the choleric tycoon and the unreflective coolie. And always there is the sense that in the midst of life we are in death. In *Troubles*, the love-sick Major writes a long letter to the object of his affections, pouring out his heart on every conceivable subject, and Farrell remarks that it will never be posted because 'the kind of letter the Major was writing is seldom voluntarily finished before the Grim Reaper bids us lay down our pens.' Well, Jim Farrell has laid down his pen; but the books remain. The books, and the memory of a lovable man.

JESSICA MITFORD

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Sean Hignett

The Mobster Quadrille

John Drummond, directing his first Edinburgh Festival, must be feeling like a long-shot gambler who, expecting two raspberries and hoping for three oranges, has hit the theatrical jackpot. The Rustaveli Company, from Soviet Georgia, are quite simply stunning. They opened their brief week in the Royal Lyceum with Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle*. J. Lolashvili, sharp-suited and snap-brimmed, more fairground spieler than narrator, pulled in the audience from the beginning, stalking the footlights with a cheeky, toe-pointing walk and a line of patter chanted into the microphone like a purring Aznavour. Behind him, the parable of Grusha the peasant girl, beautifully played by T. Dolidze, a waif with a will of iron, consumed the stage, now balletic and choreographed, now marionetted, now freeze-framed, now an explosion of invention and technique. But it was not until after the interval that the full power of this remarkable company became apparent with the entry of R. Chkhikvadze. As Asdak, village scribe become judge, in the tattered toupee, twisted-mouth make-up and trailing coat of the circus clown, Chkhikvadze possessed the stage from then on and put a second gloss on a shining evening. Yet, near me, an American left at the interval, declaring the play – stripped by the director, Robert Sturua, of its tedious prologue and made timeless parable – had been depoliticised. Perhaps; but had he stayed to the end, he might have noticed that the text J. Lolashvili was flourishing was a Little Red Book. On its cover were the initials B.B.

Depoliticised *Richard III*, the Rustaveli's other production, was not. Royalty is sick if not downright diseased, gross as a Rowlandson cartoon. Queen Elizabeth, costume and crown, is a spit image for Snow White's Wicked Queen and Edward IV is in the last senile stages of general paresis of the insane, i.e. tertiary syphilis. The heavies, caparisoned-al-capone, lurk forever in the background, switching allegiances at the drop of a crown, and, hands in pockets, whistle a happy tune while strangling with their knees anyone foolish enough to crawl through their legs. The textual changes emphasise the Rustavelian direction. Queen Margaret, eyes shadowed, a figure of Death, is on stage throughout, wielding a copy of the text, prompting players and pushing on the action. Richmond too, the golden boy of kingship, is privy to the plotting and part of it, while, towards the close, an extra character appears, a leering sardonic ringmaster of a Fool who's seen the movie, read the book and knows what's gone before and is coming after, ticking away time, mouthing the lines and – a heckler in the hustings – reminding the players what they claimed and promised earlier. Chkhikvadze, as Richard III, is no longer the clown, but a short, Napoleonic bull of a man, haunting the stage with the extraordinary power of his acting, his only deformity a walk that lists

slightly to the two-step that takes characters on and off, a walk that is cast off like an assumed limp for the funky disco beat that points the climaxes. Above this mobster quadrille the set soars, a ring of pure white draped into a tattered crown over black ravens and gallows. The crown falls finally, a map of England on its topside, through slits in which Richard and Richmond slash at each other with monstrous swords that never reach. Then, to a last winking shrug from the Fool, Richmond, atop the gallows platform, takes the crown, the circular two-step strikes up and he falters, half thrusting the bauble back, realising the nest of vipers he's got in his hands. One is left, like Richmond, reeling at the power and invention of this Georgian company.

In the Assembly Hall, dominating the approach to pre-Georgian Edinburgh, the Bristol Old Vic's production of Farquhar's Queen Anne comedy, *The Recruiting Officer*, is far from dead. It romps along, across and around the tilted apron stage merrily enough with catching performances from Neil Stacy as the name-dropping Captain Brazen and Peter Postlethwaite, 'lying, bullying, swearing, whoring, drinking and a halberd', as Kite, the press-ganging sergeant. However, zonked with images of the Rustavelian Georgian Edinburgh, it was difficult to find Bristol's *Troilus and Cressida* entirely riveting for three and a half hours. The same apron seemed now confining, requiring comings and goings of great duration and forcing the players into patterns like the spots on a set of dominoes, one in each corner, one in the middle for five and so on, through the pack. Peter Postlethwaite, here too, turned in a hard-edged Ulysses and Meg Davies's Cressida began with promise. But a deal of the casting seemed wilfully perverse. I suppose, though, as with the Georgians, you would have to sign on a company member for life to produce a few grey hairs in the walk-on parts.

John Drummond's other bold gesture has been to bring the Traverse in from the fringe to the Moray House Gymnasium with new plays by Billy Connolly and Tom McGrath. As avowedly unpolitical as the Rustaveli's Brecht, Connolly's *The Red Runner* is at times as hard for the southern ear to follow as Georgian. Three losers are in Barlinnie prison – George, nicknamed Spider (Alexander Morton), a young pusher; Peter or Peerie (James Kennedy), an old lag; and Alfie (Tony Roper), a frightened hardman who claims to have no nickname. 'How d'ye know you've nae nickname?' Peerie taunts. Peerie, an incapable burglar who can't get into his own house without a key, is more in than out of the 'Bar-L'. 'You couldnae break intae a sweat,' his wife tells him after he's been caught on Marks and Spencers' roof 'taking the dog for a walk'. Alfie describes a TV presenter seen in the street – 'his face was so pocked, it got puddles when it rained' – and the dialogue

crackles along with a raw Glasgow edge that frays into confrontation under a direction by Campbell Morrison that is so skilfully controlled and understated that one is slow to realise the choreographic precision he's put into the hell and boredom of Connolly's Sartrean cell. Apart from a caricature of a scene in a psychiatrist's office and a couple of unnecessary soul-baring front-of-curtain solos, there's a reality about the play and the language that would be impossible to achieve with an IBA censor breathing down your script.

Where *The Red Runner* may well be better suited to the smaller arena of the Traverse Theatre itself, Tom McGrath's *Animal* spreads across a scaffolding jungle. A secretary (did I hear right?) has been sent to investigate Ape Swamp and the apes duly perform, natively enough, picking fleas from each other and having it occasionally and sniffily off. So far so good, but each time they amble on, the apes go through the whole nitpicking lot again before adding another monkey trick to their repertoire and nudging another millimetre up the evolutionary ladder. Apart from the occasional 'yuk' and the creaking of the most disc-slipping seating in the entire Festival, Fringe or Official (it gets my personal Pain in the Arts Award), not a lot is said. Unfortunately, what is said is of excruciating banality. One of the apes can draw the Long Man of Cerne Abbas and talk. Washoe, the only ape we've so far managed to get in touch with in anything resembling language – American Sign Language – did not have a lot to say for itself. Blue, the talking ape, has less, and intones it out like a primary school child reading *Janet and John*.

The secretary, cool as a Calvin Klein safari suit, skips meanwhile about the jungle, feeding the apes a load of bananas and spouting them at the audience in a series of lines as limp as the skins that litter the stage. When a photographer turns up and, after months of flashing away, makes a tentative pass at her, she projects out with all the style of Wendy in a touring production of Peter Pan. 'I didn't come all the way here to get involved with a man'. The apes, I fear, miss the implication and the intelligent one very wisely shoots himself.

In *Paradise is Closing Down*, Pieter-Dirk Uys's Fringe play at the Old Chaplaincy Centre, prison is a cottage in a whites-only suburb of Cape Town from which blacks and coloureds have been cleared to the townships. The time is Soweto and three women, Molly (Polish-Jewish), Anna (Afrikaner), and Mouse (Rhodesian), are getting on each others' Rhodesian night nerves. That may sound like a prescription for a heavy evening, but the play is savagely bitter and biting, funny with especially strong performances from Naomi Buch as Molly and Barbara Kinghorn as Anna. Uys, the programme notes, is pronounced 'ace'. So is the play, which transfers to the Old Vic shortly.

Elsewhere other needles are beginning to thrust themselves out of the Fringe's 400-show haystack. The Traverse, on its home ground, has John Bett's *Talk About It* and a camped-up operetta, *Der Vampyr*, sung in German, all fishnet tights and dildoes. The first act of *Talk About It* is so hilariously anarchic that it was difficult to see how there could be a second. But there was, and it performed the amazing but not quite so funny feat of explaining the first. At St Mary's Hall, the Oxford Theatre Group's *Heroes*

zeroes in on trendy clap-trap and worthy cause alike. The songs that interrupt the action aren't up to much, but the play itself is on target. Down in Stockbridge, at the Theatre Workshop, Bob Berkly has *Fun in Futility*. He's a mime, but with none of the usual pomposity and bloody-silly-faces. Not once in the evening does he show you how clever it is to lean on a non-existent bar. Berkly's been observing the body-patter of sportsmen, the stuff that Colemanballs is made of. Animals too – the Traverse could do worse than keep an eye on his brand of monkey business.

Records

Andrew Clements

Top Notch

It becomes progressively harder for new record releases to make a mark, less possible to find corners of the repertory newly illuminated on disc. Recession, it seems, has at last begun to make an impression on even the most prestigious companies. Already we can look back on the early 1970s as the peak years of the LP stereo record, when the catalogue filled up as never before and many eminently forgettable artists found their performances enshrined. But even the lessening flow still brings many duplications, so it's remarkable that this first of what will be bi-monthly classical reviews should contain four discs that immediately become the standard against which future versions should be judged.

Among the 19th-century symphonic staples, standards of performance are particularly high, clear recommendations extremely difficult to make. There are, for instance, several versions of Tchaikovsky 5 – by Von Karajan, Abbado, Mravinsky – which at least equal the new version by Riccardo Muti and the Philharmonia Orchestra (EMI ASD 3717). It's the latest instalment of a complete cycle which has already produced the first three Tchaikovsky symphonies in sensible, fine-grained performances. The Fifth is equally well-paced and controlled, less elemental than some of its rivals perhaps in the outer movements, but superb in the slow movement and texturally refined throughout. It's a version that perhaps will really come into its own when the cycle is complete and available as a boxed collection. Bernard Haitink's new Tchaikovsky cycle, however, begins with a staggering version of the Second (Philips 9500 444) that's far and away the best currently available. The first movement of 2 presents considerable problems if it's not to sound tacky, but the structural intelligence of Haitink's conducting, which in some repertoire seems a surrogate for parts of the deeper responses, here makes the work hang together. He has the inestimable advantage of the Concertgebouw Orchestra and a beautifully detailed Philips recording.

Also from Philips is a reissue of Antal Dorati's set of recordings from the late 1960s of all the Tchaikovsky Suites with the New Philharmonia (6768 035; three records). Only

the Third Suite ever gets an airing in concert programmes; it has the weight and breadth of a symphony and ends with an enormous set of variations. The Fourth consists of arrangements of Mozart in full 19th-century orchestral garb, while the first two suites more properly fulfil the baroque model of a sequence of short, contrasting genre pieces. Dorati's performances are solid and musically, if unremarkable, and the same goes for the orchestral playing. An interesting collection, nevertheless.

Anyone setting out to build for themselves a collection of the Mahler symphonies might also be spoilt for choice. Both the latest offerings claim attention, though in the case of Zubin Mehta's Fourth with the Israel Philharmonic (Decca SXDL 7501) the main interest is to be found in the recording rather than the performance. It is hailed as one of the first of Decca's digital recordings; leaving aside the technicalities of the processes involved, the result is an astonishing sonic clarity and definition of texture and stereo positioning. As a harbinger of a new generation of recordings it's fascinating, but as an interpretation of Mahler 4 it doesn't alter my own list of preferences. Mehta's view of the symphony is above all genial and extrovert: rhythms are crisply underlined, tempi brisk and the soprano in the last movement, Barbara Hendricks, appropriately fresh-toned. But as a whole it seems to lack authenticity and comes over as self-consciously ingenuous. James Levine's version of the Fifth, on the other hand, is a genuine, honest attempt to take the measure of the most interpretatively difficult of the Mahler canon. He has already conducted 1, 3 and 4 for RCA and the rest (including Deryck Cooke's performing version of the Tenth) are planned. The new addition with the Philadelphia Orchestra (RCA 02905; two records) includes Cooke's edition of the Adagio of the Tenth as a fill-up; that is a noble, strong interpretation, but the Fifth itself is more variable. The Adagietto is drawn out as if to extract the maximum emotional weight and to indulge the Philadelphia's spectacularly sumptuous strings, the first two movements are unfussy, architecturally proportioned. The recording, however, is unremarkable, lacking refinement.

Pierre Boulez has recorded Wagner before without making any notable mark in the ratings. But a disc shared between *Siegfried Idyll*, in the original version with solo strings, and the early cantata *Das Liebesmahl der Apostel* (CBS 76721) is more enterprising, more typical of Boulez. *Siegfried Idyll* gains in intimacy, loses warmth in this version; the cantata is mostly a curiosity, with unaccompanied male-voice chorus for at least half its length. The coupling of Berg's *Lulu Suite* with his concert aria *Der Wein*, again with the New York Philharmonic (CBS 76575), is a more important record, one of Boulez's finest achievements on disc in recent years. The timing of the release of the *Lulu* fragments is rather strange bearing in mind the promise of Boulez's Paris Opera recording of the complete opera for the end of year, but *Der Wein* is a minor masterpiece, settings of three Baudelaire poems in German translations by Stefan George and in many ways a preparatory study for the composition of *Lulu*. Jessye Norman is the soloist for Boulez; it's difficult to think of a contemporary soprano more suitable in her combination of honeyed warmth and exemplary phrasing and enuncia-

tion. As an interpretation of 20th-century music it's only equalled in the current crop by the recording of the first two Bartók piano concertos by Maurizio Pollini and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Claudio Abbado (Deutsche Grammophon 2530 901). Pollini begins with the advantage over other present-day pianists of being able to take Bartók's technical problems in his stride. The result is performances that concentrate rather unexpectedly on the joie de vivre of the piano writing, playing down the dour, expressionistic cast of so many versions and substituting a Dionysiac abandon.

The two most significant pianists to have come to artistic maturity in the last 20 years are Pollini and Daniel Barenboim. Barenboim's admirers must have feared for the endurance of his talents, so widely has he seemed to spread them in the past, but his solo piano recordings have maintained a consistent standard. He has lately turned to Schumann; a version of the C major Fantasy was released a couple of months ago, and now *Carnaval* is coupled with *Fasschingschwank aus Wien* (Deutsche Grammophon 2531 090). Both are middle-of-the-road versions – *Carnaval* lacking the seriousness and refinement Michelangeli gives it, *Fasschingschwank* without Richter's incomparable flair and imagination – but beautifully played and recorded. Barenboim is a deceptive virtuoso, technically equipped for the most formidable problems.

He is also the pianist on Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* (Deutsche Grammophon 2531 093) with the violinist Luben Yordanoff, cellist Albert Tetard and clarinetist Claude Desurmont. It's a version I find chiefly memorable for Barenboim's playing rather than as a performance of the *Quartet*; the other players don't really measure up to the quality of their pianist. Two other recent piano issues may be dealt with more summarily. Vladimir Ashkenazy's latest volume of his complete Chopin edition includes the Preludes, the second Ballade and the A flat major Waltz (Decca SXL 6877); it offers elegant, well-mannered playing but like a couple of recent Ashkenazy discs leaves me rather uninvolved. Youri Egorov's record of Schumann (*Kreisleriana* and two *Noveletten*) is one of the first releases in EMI's new Virtuoso series (HQS 1428). Egorov arrives garlanded with the praise of the American critics, with no less than Andrew Porter describing him as 'the biggest young pianistic talent I have ever encountered'; technically he is extremely competent but his musical personality seems as yet underdeveloped for such protean pieces as those of *Kreisleriana*.

A seriously underrated pianist of an older generation is the American Paul Jacobs. His recordings for WEA Nonesuch of much 20th-century repertory have filled in many holes and provided superb, clean-limbed alternatives to more celebrated versions. His latest record is of Busoni's Six Sonatinas (H-71359): not great music by any means, but interesting and technically ingenious and superbly if a trifle analytically played. That is the third of my standard-setting releases; the fourth is Arthur Grumiaux's playing of the Fauré Violin Sonatas with Paul Crossley (Philips 9500 534). Fauré chamber music is undervalued and underplayed nowadays; these performances provide all the appropriate shades of nuance and quiet understatement.

Television

Julian Barnes

Eyeballs

'I'm not a great believer in the see-through society, you know.' An unsurprising remark coming from the head of a large binational company; a more surprising one, though, from the proprietor of a weekly news magazine. Presumably Sir James Goldsmith's *Now!* will exist to make things more opaque for its readers, to cover up for them all details of the messy, boring inner workings of our society. Goldsmith's comment reminded me of a piece of Flanders and Swann repartee from back in the Sixties. 'It's the purpose of satire,' Flanders would gravely begin, 'to strip away ruthlessly the cosy veneer which overlays the surface of life . . . 'Yes,' Swann would interrupt with a chirp, 'and it's our job to put it back again.'

Some critics found David Dimbleby's *Person to Person* (BBC-1) dull, Fleet-Street-obsessed, unprobing, or merely amusing. I found this hour with a major capitalist in the comfort of his own Louis Quinze – and the matters on which he was frank and the matters on which he was evasive – a riveting, enlightening and angering occasion. Dimbleby didn't 'take on' the monster – presumably the memory of his *Money Programme* walkout wasn't far from anyone's mind – and there were times when even the most basic supplementary went missing (Goldsmith: 'I have no secrets from the people who work for me'. Oh yeah? And just how far down the chain of command does this translucency extend?). But the rope-giving style of interview – which some call timorous – pays its own sort of dividends.

From the start there was a funny smell about. Goldsmith described his humble beginnings with a £200 firm in Paris as similar to those of 'any small businessman'. Any small businessman, that is, with an Etonian education, a Tory MP father and a mother with Rothschild connections. (And what about that marriage certificate narrating his bit of Gretna with the South American heiress: briefly glimpsed, it read 'bachelor, hotelier'. Or is it naturally understood in our opaque society that every 'small businessman' owns a hotel?) Though Sir James produced the occasional dinky put-down of Dimbleby – 'If you compared your company to mine, mine is three and a half thousand times bigger' – even at his most forceful he was interestingly transparent. If you're refusing to answer questions about why your company uses Hong Kong and Panama so much, doesn't it look, at the very least, nervily evasive (not to mention styleless), to reply by waving around the financial reports of Tate & Lyle and Unilever in a 'Yah Boo, go ask them' sort of way? On the few occasions when soft pressure was applied, Goldsmith immediately revealed himself as thin-skinned, irascible, and tight as a drum.

It was his salvage-job on Slater Walker – 'a symbol of a certain part of the 1960s' (and how) – that provoked, he believed, his run-in with *Private Eye*; and it was on this subject, and that of the press generally, that Goldsmith appeared at his most paranoid. This wouldn't

matter if he were merely one of the *Eye*'s routine (and sometimes innocent) victims; but Goldsmith is about to become our newest press baron, and his attitude to the profession is thus of more than narrow interest. '*Private Eye* were a club of journalists . . . who were working through the Press'; *Private Eye* 'was' Paul Foot; *Private Eye*'s left-wing influence permeated the country – 'that's why this nation has been fed pus' by its newspapers; *Private Eye*'s 'product is sheer poison'.

If one had to choose between the *Eye* and Slater Walker as 'a symbol of a certain part of the 1960s', I know which symbol I'd regard as the healthier; but on the larger issue, what does it say about the new proprietor's vision – and that of his researchers (for, like all conspiracy-sniffers, he is a keen 'dossier' man) – when his examination of his newly-chosen trade discovers that we have a left-wing press under the subversive influence of the *Eye*? Any byline-counting lunkhead will soon stumble, for instance, on the close nexus between the *Eye* and the *Spectator*; while anyone within sniffing distance of Fleet Street knows that the flow of information runs in precisely the opposite direction from that which Goldsmith imagines: *towards* the *Eye* from other papers, where right-wing proprietors might get tetchy about certain types of see-through investigation.

So what is a man with such researchers and such perceptions – he also stated, extraordinarily, that the French press isn't interested in the private lives of public figures – doing as a press proprietor? Would a prospective vet pass his exams if he maintained that the apes were descended from man? Alas, there are no exams for press barons – except those set by the likes of Slater Walker – and Sir James is soon to bully off as 'an active publisher' (I for one am hoping that ITV will stay closed for long enough to thwart the opening sales drive of *Now!* – its advertising budget for the first week, you might like to know, is twelve times the combined annual salaries of the NS's entire editorial staff). 'We've tried to get the best journalists,' Goldsmith loyally announced, 'the best journalists for *Now!*' I was glad to see from the dummy issue he was seen discussing with his editor that they've managed to secure Richard Baker to write on classical music. I'm waiting for his opening essay on the hundredth centenary of John Ireland and Mozart's Symphony No 29 by Mozart.

You didn't feel any more heartened about the state of the media after David Tindall's *The Persuaders* (BBC-1). Various commercial sponsors of sporting and cultural events explained why they put their money where they did; and altruism didn't exactly come roaring down the tube at you. 'We're not in it for the good of our health,' explained a Schweppes man who had sunk £120,000 into a series of travel reference books (and even so said 'fly-leaf' when he clearly meant 'dust-wrapper'). 'I think it gives us a chance to expose the Martini name all round the world in – how shall I put it? – a glamorous surrounding,' said a spokesman for Martini-Lotus. One backer referred to the idea of 'corporate citizenship'. This means that a company presents itself as a decent fellow giving the kiss of life to an apparently ailing form of entertainment, while actually getting large amounts of cheap advertising time out of it. So cigarette firms, who are banned from advertising on TV, circumvent this by sponsoring sport and receiving unavoidable plugs

from clean-voiced commentators (who wouldn't, in other circumstances, pay thousands to have the burr of John Arlott caressing the names of Benson & Hedges or John Player?). And if you think this is all just niggling anti-corporatism, consider the figures offered by a BMW man. Last year his firm sponsored a much-televised tennis tournament; it was calculated that the equivalent amount of direct TV advertising would have cost £20m. There seems an obvious case for an extra government levy on all those hoardings round the sports stadia: say, a thousand quid for every second of readable exposure. The tax would be self-financing; and it might also cure cynical viewers of the occasional suspicion that maybe, just maybe, some cameraman or director has been slipped some of the long green to linger for a few 'unimportant' seconds on a particular ad.

The good deed in this week's naughty world was Russell Harty's affectionate tribute to *Helen Bradley* (BBC-2). She came across as a delightfully sweet-natured, unresentful lady, quietly but splendidly obstinate in pursuit of her art, despite the repeated interdict of her father. It's easy to be cosily approving of 'primitives'; but the Lip's programme left me wondering quite how much of one she was. Apart from her figures – represented sideways after the manner of 'old Mogul painters' (hardly a naive steal that) – much of her painting, especially her skies and landscapes, seemed anything but 'primitive', and her colours often rare and worked-at. Moreover, her sense of humour – in person and with the brush – showed she wasn't *that* ingenuous. Unlike poor David Coleman, who brought us this week's naughty NVLA moment during the World Cup athletics; seemingly referring to the Montreal Olympic stadium he roared across the Atlantic at us, 'Welcome to the Big O.' David! Da-vid!

Planning

Andrew Saint

Unholy Moses

Fifty years ago, one Sunday in August 1929, the last bridge on Long Island's Wantagh State Parkway was opened. As at a signal, 25,000 cars bearing sunseeking New Yorkers swarmed over the causeway from the mainland, then clustered together in parking fields of hitherto unimagined dimension and dispersed their inmates over two unsullied miles of sea and sand. For those disinclined to dip in the chill Atlantic there were two vast bath-houses more than a mile apart, newly glistening in the costliest Ohio sandstone and fresh red brickwork, replete with every facility the age could offer. Between them ran the broadwalk, decked out to relieve its length with gay little mementoes of life at sea – funnels for rubbish, ships' lanterns for lights, and so forth. To the landward side stretched pitches and courses for any species of seaside game you could imagine. Midway between the bath-houses stood ample restaurants and shops, while behind rose the great symbol of Jones Beach, a sheer brick tower rising to 230 feet

as a monument to the proud ideal of public works in America. And of course below the broadwalk lay the *raison d'être* of the place, a seeming infinity of fine yellow sand culminating at last in an endless prospect of ocean.

As it was when it was opened, so in essentials Jones Beach State Park remains; without doubt the most lavishly planned and probably the best executed public beach in the world. Conceived and built before the depression when nobody yet believed in great public works as a means of stimulating the economy, Jones Beach should remind us that the American environment which might have been, had not propertied interests so dominated the country's politics, occasionally was. These days smart alecks claim they prefer the tatty unplanned glitter of Brooklyn's Coney Island, the other, denser and closer resort of New York's ocean-loving multitudes; one might as well compare the amenities of Piccadilly Circus with those of Regent's Park. At the time, Europe was quick to admire. Imitators came to learn from Britain, France and Scandinavia, and H. G. Wells declared it the finest seashore playground ever given the public anywhere in the world.

Yet Jones Beach certainly ran contrary to the tenor of American life and ideals in the Twenties. That it was imagined at all, that it took the shape and scale it did, that it could be pushed past implacable opposition to reality, with workmen by the thousand dredging up unheard-of quantities of sand and then hand-planting grass to stabilise this narrow bar of sand, is due to one man: Robert Moses, the toughest and most effective politician New York has ever produced. Now 90 and licking the wounds inflicted when, five years ago, Robert Caro's *The Power Broker* shattered what was left of the long myth of his incorruptibility, Moses has never enjoyed a lower repute than he does today. Moses the mastermind behind the lavish freeway system which compounded New York's perpetual traffic nightmare; Moses the breaker of mayors and even governors; Moses the villain of New York municipal housing; Moses the destroyer of New York public transport; Moses the tyrant of the New York park system; Moses the old-school, Oxford-educated reformer, utterly disdainful of those whom he desired to reform: all these accusations and more stand verified.

But the beauty of Jones Beach is that it is early Moses, from the time before his ideals had been too deeply poisoned. It remains the jewel in his crown, admired by his bitterest enemies, just as it was his own favourite creation and the summer seat of his extraordinary personal empire. That is not to say that the project is faultless, or that scruples were not disregarded in its execution. Local bosses were neatly manipulated in order to obtain parts of the land. More gravely, there were sly devices to exclude the unfortunate classes whom Moses despised. Nearly 40 miles from central Manhattan, Jones Beach could easily be reached by automobile along two of the prettily planted parkways that ramified all over Long Island under Moses' rule. But he carefully excluded the railway, limited the number of public buses, and planned the handsome stone bridges which cross the roads with a specially low clearance to discourage charabancs. So those who needed Jones Beach most were practically kept away from it and had to continue suffering the jam-packed miseries of Coney Island. To reach Jones

Beach today without a car one must still endure the rigours of the Long Island Railroad (slower than in Theodore Roosevelt's time), followed by a not-quite-reliable bus ride.

None of this has prevented Jones Beach from being hugely successful and genuinely popular from the very first day. In this sense it is the happiest memorial to Moses' peculiarly romantic philosophy and achievements, all the more fitting in that no other of his countless projects absorbed him so completely. Not content with imagining the idea or hacking a path for it through the state legislature, Moses was virtually architect and engineer of Jones Beach. The bath-houses, modestly *avant garde* in style, were designed by an obscure member of his staff but carried out in materials selected by Moses. The great watertower sprang from a sketch by Moses. Even the brisk little cut-out signs in iron (mostly, alas, now gone) were Moses' own ideas. No wonder that in his later days of eminence Moses loved to come back to Jones Beach, to be lionised in the grandiose, fundamentally absurd Marine Theatre he added to the complex, or to entertain with the style of a magnifico. Here perhaps Robert Moses may one day return to be buried at the foot of his tower, within sight of the ocean that he loved.

Films

Christopher Hitchens

Count Me Out

Dracula (X) Empire

The Ten Best Amateur Films of 1979 NFT

The Prince of Darkness has been having a boom year. There was the grimly *Mittel-europa* version (*Nosferatu*), and the relentlessly zany New York New York rendition (*Love at First Bite*), and a stage show, and the usual ration of T-shirts, posters and other promotions. But not everything that falls off a production bandwagon is necessarily meretricious. *Dracula*, simply entitled by John Badham, is a very well-made movie indeed. It succeeds in being so by not fooling about with the best conventions. We go straight into a fine shipwreck scene where it's clear that the vessel is in trouble because all the rats are briskly checking out. As the doomed *Demeter* drives on to the rocks below an Edwardian lunatic asylum, there is none to see but the feverish Mina van Helsing (sweetly done by Jan Francis). What she sees is a lolling and friendly husky leaping over the side and trotting away through the rocks. We're off.

From then on, it is uncerebral enjoyment all the way. There is not a single moment of even approximate tension or unease in the entire film. If we except (which we might as well) the few reminders of how the mentally ill were maltreated in those days, it is as pristine a family entertainment as could be devised. Great care has been taken to cast a Count Dracula (Frank Langella) who looks like a smoothie chat-show compere and whose features entirely lack that farouche distinction so vital to an X-certificate. Where the Count

makes his big mistake is in ravishing the jugular of Ms Van Helsing. This excessive behaviour brings her father on to the scene in the person of Laurence Olivier. The head of his profession has obviously been told at some point that he can do foreign accents. This is the third one in as many years, and although it is meant to be Dutch it is really indistinguishable from his Prussian Nazi pastiche – with occasional special effects from his resigned Yiddisher impersonation.

It can't be giving away much to report that Professor Van Helsing is wise in the ways of garlic and crucifixes. He is also wise in the knowledge of dawn-effects on vampires, which proves a bit of a frost when this particular Count announces that he is immune to them. ('But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?' 'Search me squire, I'm not bothered.') Jonathan Harker's intended, Lucy, exquisitely played by Kate Nelligan, falls under the spell and is saved only after some *Exorcist*-type violence and drama. The climax, which reveals that *prolonged* exposure to sunlight is upsetting to this vampire, happens at sea and is very satisfying.

The whole thing would be too risible for words if it were not for the photography (Cornish coast doing duty for Bram Stoker's idea of Whitby) and for some evidence that the team have a sense of humour. Gilbert Taylor's camerawork is excellent, rising occasionally to marvellous in spite of some sloppy sets. The transition to musical and fantasy sequences, when the ritual insertion of the incisors has to be gone through, is a splendid way of getting round Langella's lack of menace. And there is some richly-worked baroque stuff in the shooting of Dracula's lair (once, through a fine cobweb, quite hypnotic).

The conscious humour comes chiefly through Donald Pleasence, who is father to Lucy and ex-guardian of the luckless Mina. While Olivier tries hammily to rally the forces of the acceptable against the peril of Carfax Abbey, Pleasence is always on hand to puncture his big moments. Reaching for an extra crucifix in one scene; saying in another that he would never use laudanum 'on my own daughter' (having used it on Van Helsing's); one almost expects him to exclaim 'Here's another fine mess you've got me into.'

The whole is given added flavour by various Yorkshire walk-ons, making their necessary prosaic contrast to the exotic Counts and Professors, and by the seascapes which form the background. Owing to the random ability of Lucy to speak a little of the Transylvanian *patois*, I now know what many buffs have presumably known for some time, which is that *nosferatu* is (Romanian?) for 'not dead'. Catch it before the school holidays are over.

The Ten Best Amateur Films of the Year, sponsored by *Movie Maker* since 1936, and backed up by the Kodak Trophy, the Eumig Trophy and (of course) the Sankyo Trophy, are something else again. I couldn't help reaching gingerly for Kingsley Amis's phrase about 'tapped untalent'. Let me admit that I only saw nine, but honestly ... at what point did it stop being chic to show a pair of hands playing a piano and then overlay the scene to have six hands doing it in triplicate? Isn't it obvious that this makes the action seem *less* intricate and not more? (So much, thereby, for the winner *Rhapsody in Blue*.) I yearned for the good old days of the BBC's filler *London to Brighton in Four Minutes*, a standard which new technology has done nothing

to help this crop transcend. One honourable exception – *T' Batley Faust*, a cartoon about a Yorkshire merchant's pact with the devil, was a delight and shamed the others by being short as well as clever. And much more frightening than *Dracula*.

Sport

Russell Davies

All's Fair

Lester Piggott's exploit at Deauville, where he snatched the whip from a fellow jockey during the run-in to a tight finish (banned 20 days), is an instructive example of self-help ill-rewarded. Piggott's genius comes before its time. One might have expected the French, blinkered by their nit-picking legalistic traditions, to frown upon his initiative. The question now is, will British sportsmen, so long the prisoners of their own 'amateur' spirit (the word, you notice, is of French origin), rise to the occasion Piggott has so audaciously harbingered? Let us hope so; and, in hoping, let imagination linger on the gripping, gladiatorial future of our games. . .

From The Times, Monday September 3rd 1979:

It was fitting that on the fortieth anniversary of the outbreak of war (a war to the winning of which the Almighty in His wisdom decreed that my own contribution should largely consist in the upkeep of morale among the multi-national cricket-loving personnel stationed at the ancient Persian city of Khum, or Goum, where I would most certainly have performed a painful hat-trick of LBWs against a temporarily barefoot Red Army XI in 1943 had it not been for an intervening swarm of locusts attracted by our makeshift 'ball' composed of sheared washers and cartridge cases wrapped in a shredded US Navy liberty bodice and bonded with desert honey – but that's another story) England should find themselves, after lunch, with their backs pressed, be it ever so lightly, to the wall. Gooch having departed to a disgraceful shot – he was later heard to complain that nobody had noticed 'what a good imitation of Brearley' it had been – it was left to Botham and the new cap Bairstow belatedly to salvage the fortunes of Albion (if I may use such a designation without offence to the zebra'd multitudes of occidental Bromwich).

However, there by now prevailed overhead a cloud cover such as would not have disgraced Calvary, and the willing Kapil Dev, fired up not merely by previous success but, who can doubt, by Mrs Baptiste's uncommonly lively rhubarb crumble (a hazard of the Kennington Oval not much considered by historians, for all that some folk do claim that its ingestion, or not, by the players, exercises a direct though intimate influence upon the rise and fall of the legendary gas-holder) was now working up what we will not shrink from calling a fair head of steam. At all events, the first ball Dev visited upon the hapless Bairstow was an appalling beamer, fit to fell an entire coconut-shy with one blow. Bairs-

tow, though a Yorkshireman, is no fool, and bowed his head to the inevitable, which struck him forthwith upon the very crown of the skull and shot up vertically, many a mile into the sky. The combative Botham called for a run, unnecessarily in the event, for the howling Bairstow was already scampering into the arms of the umpire at the bowler's end. As the ball, meanwhile, began to plummet earthward towards wicketkeeper Reddy, hovering now immediately behind the stumps, it became clear that a run-out was almost inevitable. But in the moment of his despair, some force – call it instinct, call it pride, or what you will – came to Botham's aid. With one mighty effort, he flung his bat at the base of middle stump; and, as luck would have it, the passive timber, springing into unaccountable life, leapt up and fetched the wicketkeeper what I can only describe as a testy blow. Reddy, for whom Mysore was hardly the word, will take no further part in the series. India, with three fit men, conceded the game during tea.

From The Daily Sketch, May 18th 1980:

Wonder athlete Steve Ovett took a further step into the record books at Crystal Palace today when he won the SLOWEST 1500

metres title of his career. There was a sensation at the start of the race when Ovett insisted on lining up for the start with a bulky parcel under his arm. Officials attempted to remonstrate with the runner, but with a capacity crowd voicing its impatience, and agents, advertisers and TV crews insisting on a prompt start, Ovett got his way. Sensation piled on sensation as Ovett, carrying the parcel on his head, got away to a sprint start. But at 800 metres, and a sensational half-lap ahead, Ovett suddenly halted. Expecting the famous wave, or perhaps a short speech, the crowd gasped as Ovett sat down on the track, tore open his parcel and began to distribute small objects over the width of the track. Said Weedfield Harrier Mike Trudgeworth after the race, 'You have to expect the unusual from Steve, he is such a great athlete. I know he acts the buffoon, but he has it all worked out – not just thinking of the mousetraps idea, but knowing where to put them so as to catch everybody's stride pattern.' Ovett finished in fractionally over six minutes, having spent roughly half that time making faces at his fellow competitors as they writhed in that special agony of the man who knows he is beaten fair and square.

Weekend Competition

No 2581

Set by Tim Hopkins

Jim Slater is now writing children's books. So it's only a matter of time before children's authors start writing about high finance (they couldn't do worse, after all, in their predictions). 150-word extracts, please (or 16 lines of verse), from tots' guides to economics. By 14 September.

Result of No 2578

Set by Fatboy

We ask you to Stoppard Stoppard: the whole of one of his plays (or a new one of your devising) in a mere 180 words.

Report

by Len the Unlucky

A nasty suspicion is dawning in the Comp Complex: that Stoppard might just be one of those comp-proof writers, elusive, rare, intangible, miraculously unparodiable (*All right, we all know he gives huge parties – Spiro K.*) Some of you, of course, took the least intelligent line and starting trying to parody the parody parts of his plays, like the Mrs Drudge telephone-speech in *The Real Inspector Hound*; you might as well have tried parodying the telephone directory (*Not a bad idea – S.*). Plus which, it's hard to imitate the Master's (*That's enough – S.*) good-bad jokes without them coming out bad-bad. All in all, a tricky comp, so eight (*seven – S.*) pounds to those printed. Prepare yourselves, by the way, for a gift-packed autumn: new sponsors have been beating a craven path to our door, and one or two of them – the very select, the ones with the biggest bags of gold – have been admitted.

Travesties

CARR: Zurich 1917; throbbing with neutrality. Artists, revolutionaries – changing history, arguing in the cafes whether art was an extension of revolution by other means, or vice versa. There was that Irish writer, disgusting little man – Deirdre, was it?

JOYCE: Joyce.

CARR: Wanted to put on a play by an Irish sodomist. Offered me a part, but we couldn't see eye to eye over the costumes. And a horrible little Rumanian . . .

TZARA (*singing*): Dada wouldn't buy me a bow-wow

CARR: And a revolting little Russian with a beard. LENIN (*on phone*): Swiss Railways? When is the next sealed train to Lenin . . . sorry, Petrograd?

CARR: They told me to stop him leaving at all costs; but my plus fours were at the cleaners. What did I learn from this ferment? First, if you aren't an artist you might as well be a revolutionary. Second, vice versa. And the third thing, as Gertrude Stein said, is that the world is full of horrible little men.

BENNETT: Gertrude Lawrence, sir.

CARR: Lawrence, yes. Abominable little man. Rode a motorbike and wrote *risqué* books.

BENNETT: That was the other one, sir.

CARR: Ah yes, the other one.

MICHAEL LEAPMAN

After Magritte

THELMA: My mind keeps returning to that one-legged footballer.

HARRIS: I suggest that an old man, with one leg, white beard, in pyjamas, carrying a tortoise, hopping in the rain, would have a hard time keeping his place in West Bromwich Albion.

FOOT: I am Chief Inspector Foot. I have reason to believe that within the last hour in this room you performed without anaesthetic an illegal operation on a bald nigger minstrel about five foot two or Pakistani and that is only the beginning!

HARRIS: There is obviously a perfectly logical reason for everything. The crime you accused us of never took place. We went to a Surrealistic art exhibition at the Tate.

FOOT: I could have cracked the case. I woke up late. I had to stop halfway through shaving. I rushed into the street pausing to grab my wife's handbag and white parasol. In my haste I put both feet in the same pyjama leg, hopping into puddles. It's been a bitch of a day. Constable, I think you owe us an explanation.

RITA SNAPPER

A Tub Called Tractatus

INSPECTOR LEADWIG: I have reason to believe there is a tortoise in one of your ice cream tubs.

FILBERT RILE: That is a matter that can wait. There's no ghost in the tub, not even a disposition. What of the tongueless tea-taster with a bullet in his heart and a Masonic apron on his crotch?

LEADWIG: If we solve one we solve the other: show the tortoise the way out of the tub and the difficulty will melt away.

Outside in pelting rain a one-armed bandit hops by clutching a stuffed giraffe.

RILE: I don't see -

LEADWIG: Ha! *(he yanks a tortoise out of the tub called Tractatus)* Now if it had been hibernating in the Leibniz Surprise it would have been a different matter.

RILE: But what of the identity of the murderer?

LEADWIG: Of what we cannot speak, thereof we must be silent . . .

RILE: That is a category of a different colour. Say no more. I am as patriotic as the next man.

The tubs stand to attention as the curtain falls to the national anthem

T. GRIFFITHS

Vicars

Scene: A Brighton Restaurant

ZELDA: Why can't you be cold and cutting?

MOONEY: I'm not a sharp iceberg.

ZELDA: Waiter, remove this. There are two things I insist be firm; one of them is jelly.

MOONEY: So much for brittle, albeit ancient, wit. Now for rebuttals.

ZELDA: What fate flung us together in this sun-washed seascape nestling near meditating meadowland to cover a conventional convocation, this passel of pastors, this vortex -

MOONEY: *(interrupts)* - The reporting sound of an automatic dishwasher.

ZELDA: Axiomatic dishwasher. What do you know about alliterative articles anyway?

MOONEY: I've done more than 39, many of them for Police Gazette. *(dons trilby)* I am Chief Superintendent Jock of Scotland Yard.

ZELDA: Another old joke.

MOONEY: It's called economical recycling.

(Behind them cassocked clerics form a human trapezoid.)

MOONEY: *(hysterically)* Arrest several of these vicars!

(Keystone Cops chase clergymen across stage)

ZELDA: *(Stands up, sings)*

A moon with a view of two.

and cracks in a coffee cup,

Death now your time is up . . .

(Solo spotlight) Everything depends on your viewpoint. Nothing is fixed, nothing is free. Particularly the Press.

Blackout.

ROY KELLY



Tony Miles

Chess

No 146

This year's British Championship was a remarkably eventful tournament. Taking part for the first time for some years I was slightly surprised to find myself seeded second with an English rating of 245, a point lower than John Nunn, and only two points higher than Paul Littlewood. This perhaps provided me with a little extra motivation and I started the tournament well. By the end of the first week I had 5/6 and had already convincingly disposed of my two 'rating-rivals'.

At this point I shared the lead with Jon Speelman, the reigning champion, who had scored an emphatic win over Nunn in the sixth round. Our seventh round encounter was certainly the turning point of my tournament. The game is impossible to summarise - I will give it in next week's column - but it concluded in a wild time scramble with both sides' nerves cracking completely and an eventual draw. It was one of those, thankfully, very rare games that left me feeling mentally and physically exhausted. I don't know what effect it had on Jon but he didn't win a single game after it.

In the next round I played atrociously to hit the headlines by losing to Nigel Short, and the next day playing to 'win or bust' against John Littlewood I let a winning position slip in time trouble and, on move 40, trying to escape a forced draw, blundered my rook. Meanwhile Short took a clear lead by beating Speelman.

In the penultimate round Nunn had White against Short. Being half a point behind he obviously wanted to win, but his opponent played with remarkable speed and assurance in a messy position and after 24 moves Nunn was distinctly relieved to take a draw. This enabled Bellin to join Short on 7½/10, with Nunn, John Littlewood and Pete Large

half a point behind. In the event of a tie 'sum of opponents' scores' would decide the champion (this is the first year the play-off has been abolished). The mathematicians went to work and it was clear that Bellin needed just to draw to clinch the title.

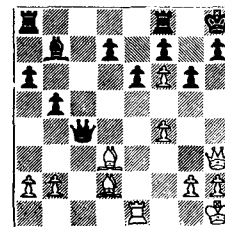
White: N Short

Black: R Bellin

1.P-K4, P-K4; 2.N-KB3, N-QB3; 3.B-N5, P-QR3; 4.B-R4, N-B3; 5.P-Q4, PxP; 6.0-0, B-K2; 7.R-K1, 0-0; 8.P-K5, N-R1; 9.P-B3, PxP; 10.NxP, P-Q3; 11.PxP, BxP; 12.B-KN5, N-B3; 13.KBxN, PxP. By now it was clear that Bellin had forgotten the intricacies of the opening variation - he had used up almost two hours on the clock. Short, on the other hand, was still playing quickly. 14.Q-R4, P-R3; 15.B-R4, R-N1; 16.QR-Q1, R-N5; 17.Q-R5, B-N5. Now the clock times were roughly Short ½ hour, Bellin 2½ hours (leaving 15 minutes for 23 moves). Short looked briefly at the position, bashed out 18.RxB?, got up and strolled around with a broad 'I've won the British championship' grin on his face. Bellin gave me a despairing look as I passed him on the way back to the board. He thought for a couple of minutes over the forced 18. . . QxR and suddenly Short sank into thought. The grin vanished as he, and the many onlookers, realised that the intended 19.B-N3 ('winning a piece?') is met by . . . R-KB5, threatening Q-N5, and White has no good move. (20.QxRP? BxN; 21.PxB, N-R4!) After 45 minutes' thought he took the coward's way out, played 19.B-N3 and offered a draw, which Bellin, considering his clock and the fact that it gave him the championship, was happy to take. Short thus narrowly failed to go into the history books as the youngest ever national champion. Nunn beat J. Littlewood to equal their eight points and I reached the dizzy heights of sole 4th place, half a point behind with two late wins.

Problem 146

Black, to play, continued with 1. . . . QxRP. (a) How should White continue after this, and (b) did Black have anything better? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than 12 September.

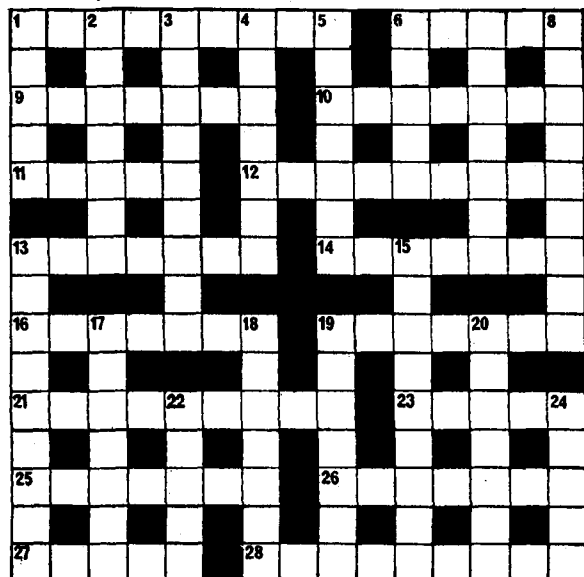


Solution to Problem 144

1. . . . RxB! 2.PxR, Q-N3; 3.R-N1 (or R-B2, NxP winning) P-B7! 4.RxQ, P-B8 = Qch; 5. R-N1, Q-B6ch; 6.R-N2, QxRmate.

Weekend Crossword 1314

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1314, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 11 September.



ACROSS

- One who washes has finally to take clothes off (9).
- It is funny to keep company with tailless animals (5).
- Heroine is hothead in work by Lamb (7).
- She's got the dress right, thanks! (7)
- Art is seen as a streak (5).
- Less important lawsuit is not a capital matter (5, 4)
- Puzzled at being full of holes (7)
- Old man about to take the lead as a villain (7).
- Gardener who plants some vegetables in the river (7).
- Footballer mentioned in honours list? (7).
- Leaving the land with half of them crying (9).
- Favourite pursuit for a bird (5).
- Great escaper (7).
- Girl embraces boy in plant (7).
- Fashions which are not quite decorous (5).

- Richardson's hero is one in the descendant (9).

DOWN

- Appears vaguely like graffiti? (5).
- Introduced among famous hereditary peers (7).
- Peak currency regulation (6, 3).
- Given the opportunity when a girl was injured (7).
- Provided an instance of the worm turning (7).
- Large pole caught at mouth of river (5).
- The wine to spoil unfinished food (7).
- Press the point when held by the Fellow of a college (9).
- Town to spoil part of a woman's body (9).
- Went down a slippery slope, holding their contents in a sledge (9).
- Come back, you rotten bouncer (7).
- Lifting up a newspaper in which I do wrong (7).

- Goes about passing through a musician (7).
- What doctor may prescribe for panels (7).
- Restore without gallery to provide controls (5).
- Fourteen-year-old desire? (5).

SET SQUARE

Solution to No 1313



Prizewinners to No 1313

Elaine Smith (London SW2)
J. C. Mace (Weston/Mare)
Clive Mills (London N1)

APPOINTMENTS

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Application forms and conditions of employment should be obtained from: **The Administrative and Personnel Officer, The Labour Party, Transport House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3JA. Tel: 01-834 9434.**

Closing date for receipt of applications: 13 SEPTEMBER 1979.

HEALTH EDUCATION COUNCIL

Temporary Research Officer

HEALTH EDUCATION STUDIES UNIT

A temporary Research Officer is required beginning on 1 January 1980 for an initial twelve month period, to work on an established Patient and Health Professional Education and Research Project currently being undertaken by the Health Education Council's Health Education Studies Unit. The Research Officer will work as part of a team of three, under the direction of the Unit's Principal, and help with the analysis of tape-recorded consultations between general practitioners and their patients. The person appointed will be trained in the analysis of the study's results and help to present conclusions and make recommendations for further work. It is possible that the temporary appointment could be extended to enable the Research Officer to participate in the further work of the project.

The Patient Project team to which the Research Officer will belong is based at 78 New Oxford Street, London, but the Health Education Studies Unit itself is at Cambridge and it is in Cambridge that secretarial and computing facilities will be available. Some travelling away from London will be required.

Good quality academic qualifications, evidence of independent initiative and a proven ability to work in a team is essential. The Research Officer's background might include some of the following experience: school teaching; social anthropology; sociology; psychology; health education or medicine. Some research and computing experience could be an advantage but is not essential.

Salary Scale £5,145 to £5,568, NHS Pension Scheme and other benefits.

Closing date for applications: 20 September 1979.

Further information and application form can be obtained from: **Mr A. D. Whelton, Health Education Council, 78 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1AH. Tel: 01-637 1881, ext. 227.**

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Further details and an application form can be obtained by writing to, or ringing, the Regional Secretary, GMWU, 99 Edge Lane, Liverpool L7 2PE. 051-263 8261.

Completed application forms of three referees must be submitted no later than Monday, 24 September, 1979.

UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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Further information and application forms from the Association of Commonwealth Universities (Apts), 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PF.

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Meetings

CENTRAL LONDON FABIAN SOCIETY. Brian Hayes of LBC on 'Independent Radio'. 5 Tavistock Place, WC1. All welcome.

ICA EVENTS. The Mall, SW1. 4 Sept. 7.30 'Obscenity Deleted' John Clark a talk accomp. 'Japanese Photography Today' 6 Sept. 1 p.m. Jessica Mitford on her new book 'The Making of a Muckraker'.

TUC CONGRESS fringe meeting. Speaker: Shirley Williams. Wednesday 5 September. Windsor Bar, Winter Gardens, Blackpool. Entrance 30p. Bar and sandwiches available. Details Fabian Society, 01-222 8877. All Welcome.

THEOSOPHY. S.a.e. for pamphlets, book list, programme. Public Talk/Questions, Sun. 2 Sept. 8 p.m. 'Purpose of Reincarnation'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2.

JESSICA MITFORD

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